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Books by Sochi Raut Roy

THE BOATMAN BOY AND FORTY POEMS

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THE BOATMAN BOY AND OTHER POEMS
(1942 edition)

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SOCHI RAUT ROY
(1954)

SOCHI RAUT ROY—A POET OF THE PEOPLE

(A Symposium)

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**Edited by
Basudha Chakravarty**

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PREFACE

The only object of this symposium on the work of Sochi Raut Roy, Poet of Orissa, is to stimulate active interest of the educated intelligentsia of our country as a whole in the creative efforts of one the quality of whose writings, according to those who know, awaits only the medium of translation for integration into the evolving cultural pattern of our nation. Considering the fact that even Rabindranath Tagore could not be fully understood before some of his main works were translated into English, it is no wonder that the integral message of the works of Raut Roy who is acknowledgedly one of the leading poets of modern India, needs to be specially conveyed to our people. Not many of India's poets and creative artists are known outside the territorial or linguistic regions in which they respectively function. Almost all that is known in India about Sochi Raut Roy is that he stood in the lime-light of the fire that blazed the trail of revolution in feudal Dhenkanal or for the matter of fact, Orissa in October, 1938, that he gave that revolution its voice and verse, that he immortalized the boy-martyr of that revolution, Baji Raut. The poem that blazed out of that revolution electrified Orissa ; the very competent pen of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya provided an adequate translation and the "Boatman Boy And Other Poems" took its place in the literary firmament of India's rediscovery of herself. Ancient, medieval, far-off Orissa found its

place on the map of India's renaissance. Sochi Raut Roy had arrived.

And he was not going to rest. A spark of the moment was not enough ; to renew and reinvigorate the lives of the people the fundamentals of life had to be probed and recast into the needs of changing times. In a large number of poems Raut Roy has depicted the lives of the common people of Orissa: their dreams, their joys and sorrows. Grandeur and pomp have had no awe for him. He has demanded them to be tested on the touch-stone of human values. The ancient, majestic sun-temple at Konarak is an abiding glory of India ; but Sochi Raut Roy is more concerned with the unknown and forgotten thousands whose toil reared up that majesty to the sky. From book to book, period to period, he has sought and found adequate techniques of expression. Nor has poetry been his only medium ; prose has also been brilliantly pressed into service, and short stories and fiction have found due places among his abiding contributions. If a portion of his writings has appeared to some critics as of the nature of propaganda, that has been so because it was derived from the stirring times that Sochi Raut Roy lived first hand. No ivory tower for him, no lotus-eating either : he has lived and emerged through the direct influx of events. He has not borrowed his experiences but earned them in fields, factories and slums.

Still under forty, Sochi Raut Roy is known widely both in India and abroad and during his recent visits on a Government of India deputation to Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Ceylon and other South-east Asian countries, he was profusely wel-

comed and accorded warm receptions by the leading cultural organizations and literary personalities of those countries, and it is indeed gratifying that he has been able to establish a wide chain of cultural contacts in many countries overseas. Recently he has been selected by Harvard University, U.S.A., to participate in the International Seminar convened by them in July this year. His inclusion among the twenty Asians and twenty Europeans selected to take part in the Seminar might well be considered an apt recognition of the representative character of his work. His countrymen will naturally look to him to convey adequately India's message both in historical retrospect and future perspective to America and Europe, and thus to amply fulfil the responsibility bestowed on him.

A number of eminent writers of Orissa, Andhra, Madras and West Bengal and of other Provinces have very kindly co-operated to make this brief interpretation of Raut Roy's work a success. All the current talks of cultural unity of India and exchange between her units would be meaningless unless each one of us undertook to get himself acquainted with the literary and cultural developments in the country as a whole. An impelling sense of duty in this regard made me seek the assistance of those who have the equipment necessary for assessing and making known the work of the leading modern poet of the State of Orissa. No words would be enough to convey my sense of gratitude to all those who have so readily responded to my request. It has been particularly gratifying to have a foreword written by no less a litterateur than Mr. Humayun Kabir.

I have included in this volume some of the earlier critical estimates assessing the values of Raut Roy's literary contributions written in English by many leading litterateurs of India, belonging to different provinces of our country, such as Shri Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Mr. P. Sama Rao, Advocate, Bellary, Mysore, Shri K. K. Kaul, Delhi, Shri D. Visvesvara Rau, Andhra, Smt. Nolini Devi and others. All these critical estimates were published long ago in the various journals of India, *e.g.*, Observer (1944), Orissa, Kaiser-i-Hind (1942), Bombay, Bihar Herald (1944), Patna, Triveni (1944), Bangalore, Bombay Chronicle Weekly (1942), Bombay, The Statesman (1942), Calcutta, The Peoples' War (1943), Bombay, and Advance Puja Specials (1942 & 1944), Calcutta.

In addition to the critical estimates mentioned above and published earlier, many fresh contributions from the esteemed pen of many learned critics and litterateurs of Orissa, Andhra, Madras, West Bengal, and other States dealing with various aspects of Raut Roy's writings and covering some of his latest output have also been added to this collection. The writers include Dr. P. Parija, Pro-Chancellor, Utkal University, Dr. Kalidas Nag and Prof. Priya Ranjan Sen of Calcutta University, Dr. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, Head of the Department of English, Andhra University, Dr. Amaresh Datta, Department of English, Saugar University, Dr. Satyendra of Calcutta University, Prof. Viswanadha Satyanarayana, Vijayavada, Prof. Pradodh Narayan Singh and Sri Gopal Halder, M.A. of Calcutta, Prof. N. Samant Rai, Prof. C. Behera, Prof. D. C. Kuanr, Prof. J. B. Mahanty, Shri

Durga Madhab Misra, of Orissa. My thanks go to all of them for their valued co-operation.

It remains only to be recorded that this undertaking would have no meaning unless it be a prelude to extensive translations of the poet's work into English and the regional Indian languages. It is a task for both Oriya and non-Oriya writers with the requisite equipment. It goes without saying that the much-desired unity of India's culture would not be achieved by lop-sided development of her different languages and literatures which have to develop awareness of one another in order to contribute to the common pool of India's cultural experience and achievements. Nay, it is necessary for national unity itself through the peoples of the widely separated regions coming to know about one another's thoughts and feelings. If this symposium does even a bit to further that much desired consummation it will indeed have been more than justified.

20/4, Aswini Dutta Road,
Calcutta—29

Basudha Chakravarty
Editor

FOREWORD

I have now known Sochi Raut Roy for over ten years. When I first saw some of his poems, I was struck by their verve and vividness. I felt that here was a young writer of great intellectual and emotional energy who, given the right environment, was capable of producing genuine poetry. A man of fine sensitiveness and emotional susceptibility, it was perhaps inevitable that he should throw himself into the national struggle. This has at times made for turgidity, but has its compensation in a sense of community with the struggling masses which ensures that his writings have something of the flavour of the common earth.

One danger which faces artists who throw themselves into a political struggle is the temptation to confuse purpose with propaganda. While all great art contains a message, anything which has a message is not necessarily great art. In the case of art with a political association, the work is often praised not because of the depth of experience or the felicity of expression, but because the feelings expressed conform to the temper of the times. This is why judgement on political literature more often than not goes astray. What is worse, it may deflect the writer from his aesthetic moorings and encourage him to write in a manner which will get him immediate plaudits. When a writer deviates from his

true course as a result of such inducement, his fate is like that of the politician. During his day, the politician is the most important person in society. When his short day passes, people very often forget that he ever existed.

It is to Sochi Raut Roy's credit that he has often succeeded in resisting this temptation. Some of his poems dealt with topics which had stirred the public mind and received extravagant praise from critics whose partisanship was greater than their discernment. In their case, the applause came to him more because he was singing of things which had an immediate appeal than their aesthetic validity. It is a measure of his artistic maturity that in his best poems, he has not succumbed to the temptation of cheap applause. Their origin may be in the political struggle of the day, but he has distilled the passion into an experience of universal appeal.

Sochi Raut Roy has also realised that the life of man has many facets and many moods. He knows that concentration on narrow political issues cannot exhaust his interests. His poems of love and nature have in them a stillness and tranquillity which stand out in sharp contrast to the fiery quality of some of his political poems. Sochi Raut Roy is still young, but he has achieved distinction as one of the leading poets of Orissa. If he remains true to his vocation as a poet, he may achieve still greater distinction. Whether he will actually do so is more than one can say, for as in other fields of the spirit in the world of art also, many are called but only a few are chosen.

Since writing the above, I have read the new poems which Sochi Raut Roy has brought together in *The Boatman Boy and Forty Poems* (Published in 1954). He has shed the immaturity of adolescence and achieved a deeper note born of feeling and experience. His love poems have a new intensity but the most striking feature of some of these poems is their concern with the mystery of being. He seeks to give expression to the urges of the mind which almost defy embodiment and yet there are lines where thought and feeling have fused in an authentic image of beauty.

Humayun Kabir

**Educational Secretary
to Government of India
New Delhi.**

AN HOUR WITH SOCHI RAUT ROY

Dr. P. Parija, M.A. (Cambridge)

D.Sc. (Hon. Causa)

Pro-Chancellor, Utkal University

POETS and artists have the gift of creating things of beauty which sometimes surpass nature. A beautiful Madonna or a Venus, a Shakuntala or *Nandankanan* (heavenly garden) are preternatural and have no counterpart in nature. The artist and the poet have synthesised these beautiful things by retouching and recreating Nature and rectifying what they considered defects in natural beauty.

These beauties have appealed to the noble sentiments of humanity and have led it to strive towards perfection through appreciation of all that is beautiful and sublime.

Poets and artists have also the power to perceive beauty and nobility where an ordinary eye does not see such qualities on account of its obvious limitations and commonplace nature. I think it is Oscar Wilde who said that we appreciate sunsets more through Turner. Although this is undoubtedly an exaggeration, there is a substratum of truth in it. When one reads the poems of the young poet, Sochi Raut Roy, one finds illustrations of both the gifts of the poets noted here.

The poet in him is stirred by the heroism of a boatman boy who was perhaps unlettered but who lay down his life for a noble cause—for the sake of the people he loved so much. Raut Roy immortalises this hero in a song which will rouse untold generations of human souls to realise their inherent nobility in such brave deeds and martyrdom.

A boy of twelve, perhaps clad in rags, perhaps half-starving, without tradition, but

“Far stubbornner than storm,
More clamorous than thunder-cloud,
Yea, far more deep and intricate
In pattern and in rhythm
Than dark-blue billows bursting
in the night”

He represents the eternal life-force bubbling out with an innate dynamism—

“Out of the hard, bare rocks of circumstance
He throbs and bubbles like a thirsty spring
Rushing onward onward !
Drunk with life’s heady current
Out of the darkness, dawnward !”

Baji Raut (the young martyr) faced bullets and bayonets and “gave himself as an offering” to his sense of duty and patriotism and finally emerged as an emblem of true sacrificial grandeur on the canvas of “unkindled futurity.”

Our poet has created an immortal hero out of this young boy to serve as an undying example of inspiration to countless generations to come. He sings :—

“O bird of fire !
Athwart the sombrous vales of that dark-
some night
Anon, you’ll come when our times are hard,

Reaching to sunset's gory gates,
Since ages immemorial,
Right upto the split-second ;
Out of an oblivion unremembered,
Till the birth-cry moment,
'The rainbow span of Time
To misty horizons stretch."

Such gems of quotations could be multiplied. In short, one can spend a few hours with the poet with profit and forget one's worries and oneself in a trance of bliss and beatitude.

Raut Roy is an outstanding poet in the realm of present-day Oriya literature, nay, of modern Indian literature and some of his works have already become internationally known. His poems give expression to the inarticulate feelings and emotions of humanity and we hope, in course of time Raut Roy will prove far more representative of the grand and renascent culture of our country than he is considered today.

The short stories of Sri Raut Roy also deserve special mention here. They portray the inner conflicts and the subtle tremors of the mind of the 'average man' in our country and stand unsurpassed in many ways for their clever delineation, and genuine humanistic approach. They depict the true life of the people in the context of the present-day environs and multifarious problems and bear glaring evidence to the poet's deep insight into human nature vis-a-vis the socio-political reality.

Let me wish in the conclusion, all success to Raut Roy in his journey to greater literary achievements and glory.

SOCHI RAUT ROY—THE POET

THE rivers, Bhagirathi of Bengal and the Mahanadi of Orissa, fertilised immense fields feeding millions of souls, and cutting their way through ageless rocks into the Bay of Bengal. Orissa and Bengal have collaborated through centuries in the fields of literature and Art. Vaishnava Humanism forms the bed-rock of the spiritual life of Utkala-Banga, placed in significant juxtaposition in our national anthem composed by Rabindranath Tagore.

Sochi Raut Roy the poetic child of Orissa has spent so many years of his creative life in Bengal that he is a veritable adopted son of Bengal like the Statesman-litterateur, Harekrushna Mahtab who can address mass meetings in Oriya as well as in Bengali. Raut Roy also is inter-penetrated with the genius of Bengal while he remains the outstanding Oriya poet of the new age. Not only does he read the Bengali classics, but also he composes now and then poems in Bengali. Some of the poems—the English renderings of which have been included in his recent book, were originally written by him in Bengali. Such bilingualism is, indeed, very rare amongst the modern writers of the two sister provinces. It is significant, therefore, that the young Oriya poet comes to Bengal for cultural consummation as well as to have the English version of his poems published from Calcutta for an international audience.

Raut Roy grew up from adolescence to youth in an age of disillusionment following the unfinished war of 1914-18. The classical pattern of poetry was collapsing with the classical structure of society. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the transformation of Turkey into an Asian Republic, and lastly, the Freedom movement in India revolutionised the trends of thought of the younger generation. The socio-economic malaise and readjustment gave a new tone and texture to the poems of the 'thirties. The imageries and symbols of the new poets of the cataclysmic age, staggered between the sublime and the ridiculous. Conventional critics and the decorous public were shocked to the marrow of their bones. What they could tolerate in prose were found intolerable in poetry ; and yet the modern poets like Elliot, Ezra Pound ; and Joyce, with a mystic perversity, persisted in weaving into poetry, the slangs and lingoies of the common man in the street corner far from the cosy and conventional drawing rooms of the blasé Art-lovers. Meanwhile the Gandhian challenge to the British imperialism with its refrain of 'Quit India' introduced a new dynamism in the dithyrambic odes to Freedom composed by young poets like Raut Roy greeted by the poet-leader Harindranath Chattopadhyay as "Buglers of Art." Naturally some of Raut Roy's verses were banned by the then British Government, for he insisted on singing, on unmusical themes like 'Bread,' 'Food,' 'Gallows,' etc. But he emerged as a people's poet, immortalising Baji Raut the 'Boatman Boy' killed by the British bullet. His ode to Man thrilled the heart of thousands and he was far too

deeply rooted into the soil not to feel the convulsions of the earth in this age of revolutions. War, famine, communal riots, and the crushing climate of frustration, pervading the cold-war period—have all left their marks on his poetry (as illustrated by the imageries employed by him in 'The Khakis,' 'Balance-Sheet', 'Atlas', 'Alaka Sanyal') and such themes, mark his poetry with the stamp of the age in which he is born.

'Asphalt streets littered with hungry men and women', have stunned him for a moment. The 'encampment of Asharha' has held him back for a while. He has paused for a minute to hear the steel-town calls. But he has never ceased marching forward. His steps have always been directed to new horizons, till he discovers and rediscovers himself as a pulsating life-centre in the vast ocean of Humanity.

As a born-poet he has ever tried to rise above contemporaneity and to reflect the cosmic vision, the eternal synthesis in which all discord and dualism melt into the supreme monism of *Advaita*. Thus amidst harrowing death he writes on the 'joy of living' in the apocalyptic vision. In some of his poems, composed directly in English, we detect signs of neo-symbolism and a rare emotive vigour, specially in poems on Nature and Love ; for poets may face many problems, but they rise above them ;—soaring in the region of eternal grace which redeem their works from being problematic.

The subtle symbolism as evinced in his poems 'Cloud-Burst', 'Night-Sowing', 'Fisherman', 'Cloud-Symphony' reveals his power and grasp of beauty and

his keen sensitiveness to the eternal values of Nature and Love.

Sometime, our poet betrays surrealist touches showing his affinities with his brother poets abroad ; and we know that the poet crossed and recrossed the dark waters of the Indian Ocean visiting Australia, New Zealand, etc., on a Government of India deputation. It is but natural on the part of a poet who belongs to Humanity that he will furrow the deep waters, traversing dangerous seas and unfathomable oceans, witnessing the 'strange corroborées' under the 'bluegum shades', and wandering across 'plateaus, ravines and promontories'.

In introducing to the public these poems in English garb, we must remind the readers that the supreme achievements of a poet is to be discovered not in a translation but in his native idiom. Raut Roy is a modern poet with an international outlook, but he is the Oriya poet par excellence. The age-old music of Oriya poetry vibrates through and through his compositions, and he comes in a true hierarchic succession of the great poets of Orissa who watch, from above, with paternal solicitude, the career of this new luminary in the horizon of Utkal literature. The monumental music of Konarak belongs as much to the past as to the future, and the soul of renascent Orissa would offer to Mother India ever new symphonies suggested by the creations of Raut Roy. We want more poets of his vision and his profound love of Man and Nature. We are sure that all lovers of poetry would understand and appreciate the unerring message and music of Sochi Raut Roy, the poet.

To help the readers follow the light and shade and the tonalities of his variegated compositions, we give, at the end, a few quotations referring to the major *repartition* of his poetic symphony.

His cosmic conception embracing the creation entire and the 'life eternal' and his feeling of oneness with the objective world are vividly expressed in the following stanzas picked up from his poem 'Requiem' :

"The bells toll.....the five bells.
The sun arches over the western brow,
The soft feel of a sea-green night,
Midst mossy quiet of dark.....

In this earth,
And creation's dust
I'm scattered
Like verticals of light diffused.

The flood-tide of my being
Streams like ichor
In godly veins :
Bursts in blooms
In the grass and sky :
To the colloquy of god-shapes
I hearken,
Upon the cloud-coasted airy arches ;
And from the eternal Ever
The moments I snatch.....

The moment's mirror
Reveals the world..... "

(Requiem)

Another example of his vision and interpretation of life and death can be given.

“To be adrift.....to brave the boundless space,
 the negation of time,
 To leave the death desexed and hairless here,
 And then enter the zion-gates of life
 purged of death and being.
 The twitterings of land birds signal earth
 The angling merlin’s silver call
 drops from the dark blue heaven,
 Like pearls falling into a deep dark well
 Resonating to the reclaiming voice of land.”
 (Cloud-Burst)

His superb symbolism will be evident from the lines that follow :—

“The black horizon I seek
 With dactyls of sound
 In sound-whorls.
 Three trees bent with aboriginal sin.
 The green crescent.
 The flutist under the peacock sky,
 Resonant swan-vowels
 Lit by lotus-fire.
 I wait for the diapasonal word,
 The Signature
 Soham.’

And again:—He seeks fulfilment in the surcease of his cause-nexus.

‘My cinder-shadow at my feet,
 Burnt out by the sun in the verbs of his fury,
 In that meridian moment
 Is my fulfilment
 That negates me.....’

And finally we hear the cry of his soul:—

‘Tattered and riven by the seven winds
Like confetti from a town of dreams
I fade. . . .
Like a fading opera
That looks unreal in the white of dawn.’
(Apocalypse)

He loves the earth and her beauteous form, and
sings of the ‘terra firma’ in manifold melodies.

‘The earth with its
arras of sea-dark
Keeps me enchained
 entombed for a moment that is tide.
Its soft alluvial plains
Its topaz lights and shade
Its cloud-banks portending rain,
Green furzes
And verdant fields
By three rivers washed. . . .’

His love of nature is intense, dark and intensive
and an almost sexual interpretation can be made of
his approach to the impersonal phenomena of nature.

“In and out I weave :
Upon the wave-bosom I lie,
Face buried in their cheek, foamy-soft,
Couchant, up-turned, half-reclining
 on airy waves cushioned,
Alabaster river floors
 tide-serrated ;
The curly waves, I ravage
Arms flailing on their yielding bosom
 suck in their gurgling joy,
 spit it out,

Crunch the water tendons
 and then,
 down the awed river spiral
 descend.'

(Fisherman)

The sense of defeatism and confusion experienced by the present generation in the wake of a relentless cold-war are amply portrayed in his poems, combined with a message of innate dynamism and robust optimism characteristic of the poet. He expresses the disintegration and the state of chaos vitiating the present international atmosphere, by means of subtle imageries and exquisite symbolism which lend unique charm to the poems and save them from being drab reporterie.

He is aware of the century's titan losses in an 'Orpheus moment' and visualizes the danger of total annihilation of the civilisation by its own creation with the click of an 'Artemis-switch' like Actaeon who was devoured by his own hounds.

He dreams of Peace on the eve of the New-Year dawn and looks ahead with eyes full of expectancy to :—

'Columbine days
 Pinioned against a sky-line honey-coloured,
 like white lilies....'

fluttering to earth like a 'snow-white dove from a
 —the words symbolising the white-robed Peace
 blood-red angry sky.'

To Man he sings:—

‘All hail !
 Greetings of the Dawn.
 I sing the epithalamium
 of darkness and light,
 To man I inscribe my muse.....’
 (Ode to Man)

The abstractions of Nature are infused with a new life and imbued with almost a throbbing personality through his words, for example, we read in ‘The Fisherman’—

‘Amidst endless rollers
 I plunge :
 Locked round the waves,
 I hug their proud, provoking, heaving breasts ;
 My lashing arms
 grind the water piers to smithereens :
 A tumbling crystal tower
 cascades in a tinkling silver shower.’

Many such lively and sparkling lines can be quoted from his poems to illustrate his personal and intimate approach to Nature.

The love poems of Raut Roy show various moods and tonalities and range from physical to spiritual. From the deep and impulsive lines of the ‘Barricade the Break of Day’ to the sublime utterances in ‘The Music of the Spheres,’ we find varietal statements of attitudes and thoughts and whatever be the import of these variations, the sincerity and the intrinsic simplicity of his poetic heart are clearly discernible in all his poems on Love.

‘Carnation lips riddled with bite,
 We shall sip the honeyed dew.....
 A midnight of unfastened hair,
 Bar the morning’s inroad....’

The accent on the physical aspect of Love in these lines gradually shifts to the spiritual realisation of the beatitude of love and the poem ‘Dhvani Lok’ (The Music of the Spheres) emerges as a supreme utterance of the sublimation of the sex when we hear :

‘In the sphere of resonance, we shall meet,
 A meeting not of the eye,
 but in an aura of soulful sonorousness ;
 On the checkerboard of diverse tunes,
 hemmed in by the haze of multiple notes.....
 Where the fragrance of life-blossom
 melts into the sonata of non-life.....
 Silhouettes....only silhouettes.’

Poetry is the supreme statement of life. Raut Roy’s poems bear the massive message of his flowering soul and reveal a rare power and beauty which are his own. They vibrate with the hieroglyphic revelations of the poet’s many-coloured personality, consecrated to Art and Beauty.

THERE ARISES SOCHI RAUT ROY

Revolutionary Poet of Orissa

THE whole world to-day is going through significant and cataclysmic changes which promise to lead to its entire transformation, both in structure as well as substance. The war of today is not just accidental ; nor are they due to “divine causes” as the less realistic, the intellectually dishonest among us, would wish men to believe. It is the logical outcome of a network of political and economic causes—the necessity in human life of a readjustment towards better existence and greater human values. War is like a terrific typhoon which threatens the calmly sailing ships on apparently placid waters ; war is like a whirlpool, which at a gulp, swallows all around and about it whirling. Nothing and nobody escapes its ravages, its sacrifices, its bitter demands ; and in its time, each one of us becomes an urgent instrument for the expression of new values and new meanings, and while thousands have yet no clear idea either as to the causes or the significance of human struggle, there are, however, some who are automatically transmuted into fine recordists of that struggle. Not all, even among the sensitive class of artists, are able to pluck the realist’s vision for their material. . . . specially the artists who belong to the already effete

class of the bourgeoisie—artists who are in the position of the notorious “washerman’s ass which belongs neither to the washerman’s hut nor to the *ghat*.” For they have lost touch with the virile and massive art-inspiration of the people which, from time immemorial, has fed and nourished life and art in their periods of decay ; and being imbued with false values forced on their minds by the very class which they serve, though apparently free within its system, and which exploits them, they are not able with appreciable ease and clarity, to get into touch with the living, massive vision of the future—the vision of a new humanity arising out of the death of a broken and extinct past red with annihilation and destruction and exploiting tyranny.

Singer of True Immortality

To be able to sing today of life and of the struggle that is on and the struggle to come ; to sing of want and human sorrow and of the hope welling in the hearts of the people of the world, is to be able to sing of true immortality. Such a singer, such an artist, such a poet makes history for man—and a new religion, the religion whose only god and justly too, is very man, woman and child paving to their utmost height in a structure of leisure, bread and culture.

Young Buglers of Art

In every country of the world today the younger writers are coming out as the precursors of this new

world and this new age. Everywhere, we hear them like bugles, blowing across the spaces notes of freedom, notes of fight. India although she is still lagging behind the other countries of the world in respect of revolutionary literature and art, is still slowly but surely producing her strong young 'buglers'. In every province of India we come across signs of revolutionary writing and thought. In Orissa, I have come across the young revolutionary poets—a few, but whose influence is being felt all over the province. One of the leading revolutionary writers is SOCHI RAUT ROY, a young lad of barely twenty-four who has made his personality felt in Orissa. When that ugly and blood-curdling incident—the shooting and bayoneting of Dhenkanal boatmen—took place, Sochi arrived on the scene with a mighty song celebrating the courage of those boatmen, the cowardice of the tyrants who slew them, and specially the immortal example of young boatman boy BAJI RAUT of barely twelve, whose name has now become a household one in the homes of revolutionary thinkers and writers. This song of Sochi's begins with the powerful invitation to the tyrant :

“Shoot, shoot as steadily as you can,
Our breasts are bared to your bullets !
Keep aside your wooden *lathis*,
For we damn it all,
Our breasts are made of rocks !”

The song caught on, even as flames catch on in a forest—lighting up all the night with its lurid glare ! Thousands and thousands sang it—it rang like a

message of release struck from a giant gong hung from the ceiling of the firmament. It was not a song any more, it became a machine-gun—a dangerous weapon which must be withheld. The song was proscribed in the State. It still is. But its effects on the masses have been ineffaceable.

Sochi's Banned Verses

Sochi had written a volume of verse which was also practically banned. It is a verse of high compelling quality, verse that speaks to the people in the language of the people. Oriya—the language of Orissa—is undergoing a change—an alchemical change. It is being moulded by him into the golden music of the authentic soul of a people now awakening to new life.

A People's Poet

Sochi is one of those rare cases of “declassing” which has been taking place among the modern writers who come face to face with reality and realism. It is a gradual process—this changing from mere intellectual and distant appreciation of the values of hideous wretchedness and hunger existing everywhere to a dynamic and living spiritual and mental experience of them. The revolution which has already long been ushered in is working its way into our very brain-stuff and life-stuff and dream-stuff. There is no escape from it for anybody who is at all virile and destined to survive.

Not An Ivory Tower Poet

Those whom it leaves unaffected already belong to the past. Indeed, the Ivory Tower Poet has had his day—and it has an history, being comparatively a brief one. The ivory tower has crumbled under machine-fire and bomb-bursts and left the poet standing naked under a bare lightning and thunder-infested sky which looks on like a blatant stare—and whose innumerable stars suddenly change their imagery and from the twinkling eyes of God become the stinking sores on the body of space ! In one of his books Sochi Raut Roy deals with subjects like “Bread,” “Food,” “Spain,” “Gallows,” etc.—subjects which are neighbours to the starving millions and the revolution which is born of hungering stomach. The following lines of a poem which I have translated from his book *Abhijan* will illustrate the point clearly—

‘I, the poet of labour stand
With pen for weapon held in the hand.—
I stand and dream of the day to come
When men shall rise out of martyrdom,
Rise in the dawn of freedom when
A new red sun and my poet’s pen
Shall sign the charter of Man for Men !’

. A new red sun is surely rising out of the stark darkness of the past—a sun that marks the forehead of a new morning for man, even as the castemark of the religion named humanity. And the poet’s pen will sign—must surely sign “the charter of man for

men" if it is going to be worthy of its name—and prove to the world Shelley's famous pronouncement :

"Poets are the unacknowledged
legislators of the world—"

changing only the adjective from 'unacknowledged' to 'acknowledged'.

"Kaiser-I-Hind",
Bombay,
15-2-1942.

INTRODUCING SOCHI RAUT ROY

(An estimate)

Prof. Priya Ranjan Sen, M.A., M.L.A.

SHRI Sachhidananda Raut Roy has been introduced to readers of literature by his "Boatman Boy And Other Poems" as well as his other outstanding works. But I must confess that his works still remain to be introduced, or if that is not to be allowed as a proper expression,—the poet deserves a fuller introduction.

Of the many works that are there to his credit, I pick up only a few—one is "Masanir Phul"—the flower of the cremation ground, published from Cuttack in 1945, and containing four short stories. It is the first story of the collection which lends its name to the book and relates to the reaction of a hardened cremation worker who is raised to a new sense of love and poetry as he looks upon the face of a woman lying stretched on the pyre ready for cremation. The woman had died in doubtful circumstances—a suicide or abortion—who knows? But when nobody would touch it, he agreed to take up the matter because it was his job to see that people were cremated after all. He had stipulated to get the gold trinket at the nose of the deadbody as terms of service for want of anything better to recompense him. But when the face-cloth was taken off and the moon-beams played on it, the face of the

dead woman looked so pretty—a reflection of the moon in the sky, half-hidden by clouds, playing on the curly ringlets over her face, and she looked so forlorn and helpless that Jagu Tewari had not, for once in his life, the heart or the hardihood to take away the trinket off and keep it for himself as his fee, according to previous stipulation. It is this moment in the life of a hardened man used to facing all sorts of death on the cremation ground that Raut Roy seizes for the purpose of his short story, and I must say that he does it well. The story breathes a note of superb humanism and reflects the subtle psycho-analysis of the writer.

In 1949 we find from him a volume of lyrics “Abhignyan”. Some of the poems had already been published in periodicals and all of them have a note of confidence in the future. Optimistic in the very first poem, in the second poem of the same volume he brings in ideas and sentiments while welcoming the 15th August which might well be repeated to-day as a message for the day. The half a dozen poems at the beginning of the volume have a unity of tone and breathe a resolve to build something new. The general tone of the poems is full of idealism which Gandhiji and New India might have served to create and foster.

In 1950 he published a volume of short stories which had been printed 15 years earlier in various periodicals. Most of them were translations or adaptations whence he called it *Chhai* or ‘The Shadows’ the cinders however, concealing the flame. He attained celebrity by publishing the “Baji Raut” the hero being a 12-year old boy, born in the village

of Nilakanthapur in Dhenkanal State. In 1938 there was a rising in the Orissa States and on the night of the 10th of October a Police force after firing upon the inhabitants of one village wanted to cross to another. They roused Baji Raut from sleep, but he refused to ferry them across because he had to obey the *Praja Mandal*. His refusal was greeted with a blow from the musket. He then shouted a warning to *Praja Mandal* workers to come to his help, and what followed then was that seven of the *Praja Mandal* workers including this young boy were shot dead by the police,—this Baji Raut whose dead body the poet carried. The poet had attended his cremation and it was this heroic martyrdom which had supplied him with the material for the poem. The poem is a milestone in the development of modern Oriya poetry and it assumes almost a classic dignity by embodying the heart-beats of a nascent nation.

Fitly divided into five sections, it gives a resumé of the story of the gallant hero and his times. The poet had himself translated it into Bengali and it was this poem which translated by Harindranath Chattopadhyay into English, had formed the nucleus of the volume with the caption "The Boatman Boy And Other Poems." The English version of the poem had been appreciated by the critics and lovers of literature in all parts of India.

No estimate of Raut Roy would be complete without reference to his interest in currents of contemporary English poetry and also his acquaintance with Bengali poetry—by the way, he contributed poems in Bengali to 'Mandira', 'Alaka' and 'Kavita'—poems which were later translated by him into

Oriya and incorporated in one of his books. I am glad to find that his ideas are creative, not destructive, and the poet is technically alive to the needs of bridging the gulf between the written and spoken language as a preliminary to the creation of a virile and full-blooded literature. One is tempted to ask if this in any way is due to the influence of Pramatha Chowdhury and 'Sabuj Patra' ; one never knows.

Raut Roy is not under the gloom of an impending catastrophe which he sometimes visualizes nor is he agreeable to denying the past and the present in his yearning for the future.

In the "Pandulipi", he has turned to new technique of verse, showing his aptitude for experiment in prose verse and his acquaintance with present-day occidental movements and trends of advanced political opinion. His poem on "Sahajahan" and also his "Ramnam Satya Hai" are perhaps typical instances. I may also at the same time mention his readiness to assimilate from other literature—his inclusiveness should indicate sufficiently his poetic promise and greatness.

The eyes of the poet do not wander very often from the village green. His "Palli-Shri" dwelling on the beauty and charm of the village, finds in the small village surroundings so many points of admiration. The sketches are executed in a very simple language which the masses will find no difficulty in understanding, and the book has found a place in the list of University text-books—no small recognition for a contemporary poet. His poignant humour had already been known to the reading public through his "Hasant" a book of biting satires and witty verses.

Sochi Raut Roy—it is refreshing to note, can write both in Bengali and Oriya to vindicate his creative vigour. We hope that he will pass on to greater heights and synthesise his poetical excursions into an integral piece which will be a substantial addition to modern Oriya and consequently to Indian literature.

SOCHI RAUT ROY : A CRITICAL STUDY

K. K. Kaul, M.A.

THE main body of "modern poetry" begins as a response to the revolutionary speculations and promptings of the second half of the eighteenth century. To-day the poets not only accept their environment as a subject for study and improvement, but derive from it a new, comparatively literal, style and approach. The result is the realism—whether reportorial or critical—that distinguished a major portion of the literature from the beginning of the eighties to the present day. "Realism" aims at an exact, complete, and honest reproduction of the social environment, of the age in which the author lives, because such studies are justified by reason, by the demands made by public interest and understanding and because they are free from falsehood and deception. This reproduction should be as simple as possible so that all may understand it ("Le Réalisme" Edmund Duranty, 1856).

Now about the middle of the nineteenth century the movement of realism as it is understood to-day was crystalized. Racine, Moliere, Boileau, La Bruyere. Le Sage, Balzac, Flaubert, Goncourt brothers, Zola, etc., provide us the material which is thoroughly realistic—but I suspect, few readers know that it was after 1877, that Realism was created by Maupassant, Huysmans, and Octave Mirbeau. Few critics deny that these writers lacked the ability to touch the emotions or to measure man in society with anything larger than a foot-rule. Their horizon did not

extend beyond the bourgeois virtues and common-places.

To-day a vast and troubled life, inseparable from the travails and aspirations of modernity, unfolds before the writers of Europe and India. Many of them try to face it bravely and intelligently.

Sochi Raut Roy is one of these. In his book "Boatman Boy," Sochi brings to the new style the mental and emotional vigour without which it could only remain a very drab kind of photography. Here we have no fantastication on the subject of compromise but a realistic exposure of local politics. It is no "assassination in the sacrificial grove of poetry." Here is a breath of greatness ! The vision possesses magnitude and the background has something of magnificence. To-day these poems about Baji Raut may only strike most of us as a small flash in a very small pan, unless the merry-go-round of history brings the issues back again from which another revolt would be necessary. But still a careful examination of the realistic problem, foaled in 1942, will show that it still has some teeth left. To me the intensification of Sochi's grappling with realities proves that henceforth a poet was not to expect honour for merely cooking up a stew of a poem. If these poems had not this bleakest realism with an intense protest against everything that shackles the individual in his pursuit of happiness and integrity these poems would be deadwood in our age of prophylactics and mercury compounds. The lines :—

"Shoot, shoot as steadily as you can,
Our breasts are bared to your bullets !"

show his delvings into the depths of recent Indian politics with the calculated precision of a deep-sea-diver. His realism has no exuberances and the pseudo-science of Zola. At times his poems remind one of impressionists like Jean Giraudoux and Andre' Salmon. He is the continuator of the realistic school of Marcel Proust, Ce'ard, Lucien Dessaves, Paul Adam, Gaston Che'ran, Le'ou Werth, Roger Martin Du Gard and that isolated creator of "Jean Christophe." His lines :

"I stand and dream of the day to come
When men shall rise out of martyrdom,
Rise in the dawn of freedom when
A new red sun and my poet's pen
Shall sign the charter of Man for Men !!"

show the furious spirit of Sochi, "a boy in years, a man in genius, a God in ambition." Like the German poets, Richard Dehmel, Falke, Liliuecorn, Bierhamm, Couradi and Karl Henekell, his personality has the wild and sudden beauty of a falling star. His soul's battle-cry is in the above stormy lines. In "Boatman Boy," Sochi blazes with a passion for human liberty, and like Pound, Eliot, Markham, Elinor Wylie, Louis Untermeyer, George Sterling, Carl Sandburg, James Oppenheim, Vochel Lidsay, Harry Kemp, Witter Bynnes, Courad Aiken, Joseph Auslander and others, like MacNeice, Rex Warner, Garcia Lorca, Auden, A. Macheigh, Allen Tate, Charles Williams, George Trakl, R. P. Blackmur, Frederic Prokosch, David Gascoyne, Nancy Cunard and Walter Lowenfels—he cuts loose from the glori-

fication of the privileged classes and turns to the defense of the millions who were loaded with :—

“Wrongs unredressed
And insults unavenged and unvengeable.”

His poetry is a terrific proclamation of human rights, the protest of the plundered people, a flaming thunder of indignation against the shames and cruelties. It is “truth clad in hell-fire.” He is no Tagore—recluse yet starry ranger, a spy upon Eternity, but has some of his seminal energy and his thunderous and spectacular manifestation.

In the end I only wish that in the years to come, no frost will fall upon the enthusiasms of his spirit and he will not lose interest in the labour and sorrow of the people—that he will keep on hurling fire and thunder on the Towers of wrong, the towers that blacken every Babylon—that his “Boatman Boy” will spring through the hoop and light confidently in the saddle—that it may attract the eyes of the world.

“THE POETRY OF SATCHIDANANDA RAUT ROY”

(A Resume)

Prof. D. C. Kuanr, M.A.

The Literary Background

THE contribution of Sri Satchidananda Raut Roy to the making of modern Oriya Poetry and Prose cannot be overestimated. He emerges as the most outstanding literary figure of modern Orissa and his writings have ushered in a new era in our country's literature. The evaluation of his importance as a leading national poet needs, therefore, careful analysis and a socio-historical approach to the subject-matter of his works. He began his literary career as a Romantic poet and his first publications were "Patheya," a collection of mystic verses and "Purnima," a poetic drama depicting the mythological love episode of Siva and Parvati. These two books reveal the highly imaginative mind of a young promising poet and the style closely follows the tradition of the "Sabuja Poets." English-educated young men of the University like Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh, Kalindi Panigrahi, Baikunthanath Patnaik, Harihar Mahapatra, Sarat Chatterjee and a host of others were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of nineteenth century English and continental literature and started writing poetry with a new vigour and outlook. The great influence of Rabindranath Tagore was no less responsible for the growth and development of this new outlook in post-Radhanath Oriya poetry. In spite

of the individual differences and idiosyncrasies these poets had much in common and from the point of literary convenience they may be brought under the Sabuja group. After Radhanath Roy, this group along with the "Satyabadi school of poets" headed by Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das and Godavaris Misra ushered in a new era of hope and liberal outlook in Oriya literature and Oriya Poetry again sang her mellifluous tunes in short lyrics putting aside the long poems, regular metre, Sanskritised diction and allusive style of Radhanath, Madhusudan or Meher. If a particular literary period has something to do in stirring the creative elan of a young poet then the "Sabuja School" takes the credit of introducing Sri Raut Roy to the Oriya readers and he was probably the last talented member of this group. But by temperament and genius Sri Raut Roy was essentially different from the rest of the brotherhood. His keen interest in politics and other social activities gradually took him closer and closer to the masses and in his own eyes he saw the miserable plight of his countrymen. India was still dependent and the struggle for National Independence filled the air with grave tension and unrest. A sensitive young man like Sri Raut Roy could not shut his eyes to all these pressing problems and flung himself head-long into politics. In his College days he was no less famous as the unrivalled leader of the students and took active part in strikes, political agitations ; he organised meetings, led processions and for several times courted imprisonment. During this period he also came in contact with the Marxist leaders like the late Bhagavati Panigrahi and was attrac-

ted towards some of the tenets of Marxism, especially its theory of Dialectical Materialism and the materealistic interpretation of history and the ideal of social equity and socialistic reconstruction. All this gave a fresh turn to his poetic outlook and the ivory tower built by the neo-romantics could not hold him any longer. In the numerous poems, short stories and essays written by him during this period the change of outlook is clearly discernible. Instead of "singing music sweet as love" his poems of the period reflect the toils and sufferings of the peasants in the fields and the workers in the city slums. He was thoroughly aware of the injustice done to the suffering millions of the country and invoked the coming of a new order almost with Shelleyan gusto :

"Salute O dear ! the storm that is coming
The mountains, rivers and the oceans
 are offering salutations to him.
Creating a new sensation in the world
He is having his coronation
 in the mind and heart, in light
 and darkness.
Don't shut the casements O Coward !
 Don't close the doors ;
Bow to the storm that is coming
Bow to him, my dear"

The storm symbolises the struggle and sufferings through which only the new order can be achieved. In many of his later poems this reference to storm and a painful longing of the poet for a better future runs almost like an undercurrent. His poems have

taken a definite realistic turn and henceforward both in technique and subject-matter modern Oriya poetry enters a new phase of development.

Sri Raut Roy's Major Poetical Works :

'Baji Raut' is still considered to be Sri Raut Roy's masterpiece in poetry and through an English rendering of it by Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyay the book has received universal acclamation. In October 1938, a bloody firing took place in the State of Dhenkanal to suppress the political agitation launched by the *Prajamandal* against the Ruling Chief. Many innocent patriots lost their life facing the police bullets and seven of the corpses were brought to Cuttack to be shown respect due to the martyrs. They were taken in a huge procession to the cremation ground and Sri Raut Roy along with his friends laid the dead bodies on the funeral pyre. Among the dead there was a small boy of twelve who faced death showing exceptional courage and patriotic spirit. Sri Raut Roy has celebrated the great sacrifice of this young patriot in his famous poem "Baji Raut." "While sitting beside the dreadful funeral flames that consumed the martyrs," writes the poet in his introduction, "many disconnected thoughts flashed in my mind and by recollecting those thoughts I have composed this poem." Baji Raut is a long poem consisting of five parts and between 1941 and 48 it has gone through three reprints. The greatness of the poem does not so much lie in the mere recording of the achievements of a small boy who sacrificed his life for the cause of the people, but in the huge

superstructure of ideas and inspirations that the poet has built up on a frail framework. The poet has rightly said that Baji Raut is no more an individual but an institution. In the hands of the poet he has become the eternal symbol of freedom and liberty that descends through ages upon a dark and chaotic world to quicken a transformation of the social pattern. His spirit represents all that are good and noble and heroic in human nature and mankind will be much poorer by losing him for he is an embodiment of all those abiding values.

“Through ages, at the end of every epoch
 You come back to this earth—
 Crossing the boundaries of life, and death
 You appear in history—
 As a great dynamic force
 Holding the banners of a new order.”

By the magic touch of the poet's genius the individual has turned to be a great dynamic force in history and the person has assumed the magnitude of impersonality. A similar note also echoes in the third chapter of the book devoted to the widow mother of the martyr. The poet vainly tries to console the afflicted mother in these words :

“Wipe out your tears mother :
 Everyone now sings the triumph of your breast.
 The world has accepted
 what was once yours alone.
 In the womb of the Universe
 Your child takes birth—is reborn.
 O mother, O great conceiver !

Give up thy sorrow,
 In the sacred memory of the nation
 Your child becomes greater
 winning over death at each step."

From the point of technical excellence and lyric beauty the poem is a unique success. Scrupulous care has been taken in the choice of words and in the selection of appropriate poetic rhythm. Coinage of new words and phrases while adequately expressing the thoughts of the poet also bring in an added charm and freshness to the poem. Baji Raut has been extremely popular among all sections of Oriya readers and even the hostile critics of Sri Raut Roy have unanimously praised the book. In fact, the poem has got all the merits of great poetry.

Next in importance to my mind comes Sri Raut Roy's "Palli Shree", a collection of poems depicting the rural life of Orissa. If India is a land of villages then Orissa is more so, and the rich and varied culture of this ancient State lives in the simple customs, festivals, beliefs and manners of living of her country folk. Years of starvation, death, famine and acute poverty have not been able to squeeze out the sap of their life and tradition have taught them how to smile and be hospitable amidst sufferings. In more than half a dozen poems of this collection the poet has tried to reveal the different shades of village life in a simple and forceful style. *Chhota mora ga'nti* or 'my little village,' *Palli Sakal*, *Palli Sanja*, *Raja Parva* and *Grama Smashan* are the best pieces of the collection. In 'Rangoon Jatri' the poet has given a painful picture of the village peasant who

is forced by circumstances to leave his dear home and hearth, wife and children and goes to distant Rangoon to earn a livelihood. *Zamindaranka Sandha* or the Zamindar's Bull reveals the oppression of village Zamindars. 'Maluni,' a popular folk tale of Orissa also finds place in this collection. While depicting the rural life with all delicate details the poet has also given a graphic picture of beautiful Orissa countryside with its lily ponds, spreading banyan trees under which sits the village deity profusely besmeared with vermilion, the tall coconut trees, temples, mango and bamboo groves and above all its beautiful dawn and sunset. The pictures are so familiar and lifelike that at once the reader feels the irresistible feeling of nostalgia. The poems with their rhythmic movement and spontaneous lyrical charm haunts our memory almost like an idyllic song. After the late Nandakishore Bal, Sri Raut Roy is probably the only Oriya poet who could recreate rural Orissa so effectively and so successfully. Though there is much of local colour and setting in the poems, "Palli Shree" represents the very spirit of rural India—with its sorrows and sufferings, smiles and tears.

"Pandulipi" is a collection of poems written during 1936-46 and published at different times in different periodicals. These scattered poems were first collected and published in book form in 1947 by Utkal Book Agency, Cuttack. In this collection we notice a marked development in the poet's technique. The poems are realistic in nature mixed with bitter irony and satire. The tone of irony becomes more conspicuous especially in the second half of the book entitled "Lohita" or red. Urban images and symbo-

lic expressions have been more frequently used in these poems. The frustration and disillusionment of the modern age which characterise the poems of T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden or Spender are also found with all their poignancy in poems like *Protima Nayak*, *Ramnam Satya Hai* and *Padmabhook*. The tense political situation of the period has evoked the poet to write some of his best political poems like *Berlin*, *Hitlarer Dooswapna*, *Hitlarer Sheshokti*, *Ameri*, and *Istahar*. In *Konarak* and *Shahjahan* the traditional song of love and praise has melted into a brazen note of realism and irony. In "Konarak" the poet instead of singing the praise of the King and his charity asserts the selfless sacrifice of the thousands of artists and sculptors who gave their youth and years for the sake of the King. "Taj-Mahal" appears to the poet more as a symbol of Imperial vanity and whim than a sacred monument of love. Thus Sri Raut Roy has drastically broken away from the traditional outlook of the romantic poets both in poetic technique and treatment of subject-matter. In the poem "Raja Jema" or "Princess" he writes :

"I, Sochi Raut Roy,
 (Not Tagore or Shelley)
 I am the poet of this earth and sky.
 It is none of my business
 to paint beautiful pictures on paper.
 Whenever you open a printed book of mine
 There you get the touch of a new man ;
 The story of the whole humanity
 Finds expression in my verses."

"Pandulipi" is an excellent collection of poems. While providing pleasant reading it reveals to the reader the bitter aspects of a warworn chaotic world in which we are living.

"Bhanumatir Desha" 'Hasant,' 'Abhijan' and 'Abhignyan' are some of the other poetical works of Satchidananda Raut Roy, out of which the first two need special mention here as they reveal some new aspects of the poet's genius.

In "Bhanumatir Desha" the poet has brought something of Freudian psychoanalysis into poetry. The book is divided into five parts with very interesting titles and against the background of city and village life the romantic love episode between Taranga and Binota develops. Animals and natural symbolism have been dexterously used to express the interplay of passions and emotions of the hero and heroine which to a certain extent remind the readers of the mysterious sex-symbolism of D. H. Lawrence's novels and poems. The whole book is written in beautiful free verse with occasional rhymes and in spite of the frequent use of urban images and symbols the whole poem has the spontaneity and grace of lyric poetry. The third part of the book entitled "Ketakir Chithi" reveals the beauty and charm of rural life in a way which can only be possible by the author of "Palli Shri." "Bhanumatir Desha" is a unique contribution of Sochi Raut Roy to modern Oriya poetry.

"Hasant" reveals another aspect of the versatile genius of the poet. Long before he wrote "Chitragriba," a humorous and satiric composition in prose,

and "Hasant" is his second triumph on this line in verse. Usually humorous writings are meant for light reading and amusement, but they also can be as serious as the writings of Dryden, Defoe or Jonathan Swift. While providing amusement to the readers they expose the corruption and ugliness prevailing in their contemporary society, religion and politics. In our days Evelyn Waugh, James Thurber, P. G. Wodehouse or Saki are no less popular for doing similar services to the present generation. May be that satire or humour retain no permanent value as they are aimed at contemporary events or situations but still their importance or usefulness in life and letters cannot be undermined. "Hasant" is a book of this type. It contains eighteen satiric and humorous poems that ruthlessly expose the sordid aspects of the contemporary social, political and cultural life of our country. The corruptions and hypocrisy that are eating into the vitals of our political and moral life have been mercilessly exposed by the poet in the poems like *Gopabandhunka Sradha*, *Deva Sava* or *Sishu Rastra Bandana*. Narrow provincialism has been mocked at in the poem "Hanumanar Gotra". On the whole all the poems in the collection provide a pleasant reading and while laughing at the follies of others we also become self-conscious. The poems in the book reveal a keen sense of the author's humour and are marked for their sharp wit and lashing criticism.

Besides poetry, the contribution of Satchidananda Raut Roy to Oriya fiction, short story and general prose is no less important but those however, do not come under the scope of this essay.

Raut Roy as a Technical Innovator :

Technical innovation is an important event in poetry, or in true sense, in all the branches of art and literature. It can be effected only by persons of great genius and artistic sensibility. In the last part of the 19th century Charles Baudelaire and G. M. Hopkins brought epoch-making changes in poetic technique and to-day what we understand by modern poetry—gradually took a definite shape after the first world war in the hands of the talented poets like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Aragon, W. H. Auden and a host of others. These poets expressed the bitter reactions of the World War and the subsequent disillusionments in their poetry through a novel technique. Free verse and speech rhythm became the common fashion ; urban images and evocative symbols replaced the traditional poetic diction. The influence of this new school of poetry gradually spread to other countries and was warmly received by the younger generation of poets who were fed up with the already exhausted romantic tradition. It is but natural to be influenced by the contemporary developments in literary field ; the influence may be of a single individual or of a school, provided the author keeps himself far off the boundary line of plagiarism. In the opinion of T. S. Eliot the great poetic genius of our age, no author can claim himself to be absolutely original. The past traditions and the present developments are bound to influence him when he sits down to write.

When we scrutinise the poetic technique of Sri Raut Roy—it is no wonder that the western especially the modern English poets have exerted a consi-

derable influence on his style. After a careful study and assimilation of the modern trends of western poetry he has evolved his own style which clearly distinguishes him from others. There is a striking flexibility and precision in Sri Raut Roy's use of urban images or in the coinage of new words. He usually writes in free verse and the staple idiom and movement of his poetry derive force directly from modern speech. In "Bhanumatir Desha" his new experiments in the use of animal and natural symbolism to express human passions and emotions have attained a great degree of success. In bringing in all these changes into Oriya poetry Sri Raut Roy is certainly a pioneer. By his individual efforts he has taken modern Oriya poetry to such a stage of development that the younger poets don't find much difficulty in expressing their complicated thoughts and ideas through the subtle medium established and nourished by him.

It is no wonder that Sri Raut Roy had to suffer a good deal in the hands of the conservative critics for his new innovations. The hostile critics viewed at his poems with derision and hurled foulest abuses on him taking him to be an iconoclast in the sacred temple of 'Utkal Bharati'. Of course, with the change of time and outlook, people have realised the merits of Sri Raut Roy's contribution to Oriya literature and among the intelligent section of readers there is a growing appreciation of his writings.

A Critical Estimate :

It is rather a hard and delicate task to assess the literary merits of a writer who is still writing and

has not yet reached his fortieth year. Much more is still expected from the prolific pen of Sri Raut Roy ; in fact, at present nearly half a dozen of his new books are in press.

But from an account of his up-to-date publications a broad critical estimate of the author can be made. Sri Raut Roy took the last thirties by storm, and as far as I remember, there was not a single magazine or literary periodical in Orissa where his numerous poems, short stories or essays did not appear. He created a wide stir in the literary field of Orissa and the younger generation almost worshipped him like a demi-god and guide. They swallowed up whatever came from his pen and began writing imitating his style and thoughts. Some talented members of the younger school like Raghunath Das, Binod Chandra Naik and others produced a number of admirable poetry utilising the novel technique introduced by Raut Roy and much against the wishes of the conservative critics. Henceforward Oriya poetry entered a new phase of development. Gradually many more persons devoted their attention to enrich and develop modern Oriya poetry as a result of which now it stands on a sure footing and can challenge comparison with any rich regional literature of India. The credit, of course, goes to Sri Raut Roy as the pioneer and as yet, the most dominating figure in the field of modern Oriya literature.

As a progressive poet Satchidananda Raut Roy believes in a new world order to come where life will be much happier and worthliving. So, the post-war frustration and disillusionment or the delicate awareness of the poet's own disintegrating personality which

characterise most of the modern English poems are peculiarly absent in his poetry. In poems like 'Protima Nayak,' 'Ramnam Satya Hai,' 'Padma Bhok' or 'Bhar Samya', the poet has tried to reflect something of the despair and frustration of a troubled and chaotic world in which we are living but the despair is more due to the present economic or political uncertainty than to the loss of any faith or higher values of life. Though W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and many other modern English poets have accepted socialism as their ultimate solution for a better world yet their poems show a manysided awareness of our present-day problems which is very often found in Raut Roy's poetry. Most of his poems end with an optimistic note or with a vague though earnest longing for the bright future of which the poet seems to be fully confident. In a poem named 'Pada Dhvani' or 'Foot-Steps' the poet writes :

"Don't know who will come—
Known or unknown ?
Yet I count the days,
Count the moments in my lonely cabin.
In the face of the hungry millions
I believe, I have discovered their familiar
address."

Such is the foregone conclusion of many of his poems. His political preoccupations have also led him to write a book like "Abhijan" which is more or less propagandistic in nature. But he is at his best when political thoughts do not blur his finer poetic sensibilities. His best writings like 'Baji

Raut', 'Palli Shree', 'Bhanumatir Desha', Chitragriba' or the numerous short stories are essentially pure creations of art and they will be valued as such.

Unlike the romantics Satchidananda Raut Roy's outlook towards life and things is critical, dispassionate and realistic. In this respect he completely differs from his romantic predecessors. In the second enlarged edition of 'Baji Raut' he has added a few more stanzas where he criticises Tagore, Dr. Mansingh, Gada Naik and Baikuntha Patnaik, who by evading the stern realities of life had created a dream-world of love and romance. Sri Raut Roy believes in facing the hard realities of life boldly and in his poems the note of optimism and hope is conspicuous. As T. S. Elliot turned to Roman Catholic religion, for his solution so also Sri Raut Roy looks forward for inspiration to a new social order and economic and cultural freedom of the masses.

But inspite of all his novelty and changes both in poetic subject-matter and poetic technique how far has Satchidananda Raut Roy cut adrift the rich traditions of Oriya poetry? From 12th Century onwards Oriya poetry has been enriched by the mighty contributions of Sarala Das, Upendra Bhanja, Abhimanyu Samant Singhar, Kavisurya, Gopal Krushna, the Pancha Sakhas and a host of other luminaries of whom any great nation can be justly proud. To me it seems that in the writings of these great poets a deep romantic, religious and moral consciousness runs like a life-stream. Most of the poems of Sri Raut Roy betray this romantic and moral consciousness which can be easily traced out. Some of his poems like 'Alaka Sanyal' are so over-

studded with romantic images and allusions that they almost read like medieval Oriya classic. In conclusion, it may be said that the poetry of Sri Raut Roy, however novel and revolutionary they may appear at the outset, can be easily linked up with the long chain of development of Oriya poetry on a traditional line.

SOCHI RAUT ROY

A Poet of Inspired Human Existence

Dr. Satyendra, M.A., Ph.D.

POETRY as a sentimental force is dying while poetry as an intellectual force is evolving out of the ashes of the former. This is happening in the wide world, but India is holding a new prospect for the world of letters, as it is doing so far the savants and statesmanship are concerned. It is just in the line of her great tradition nurtured by Valmiki, Vyas, Kalidas, Bana, Swayambhu, Tulsidas, Surdas, Ravindra and Prasad, etc. Essence and existence are in severe conflict today. Existence has got its own consciousness these days, and is organizing every material force to overthrow essence outright from the realm of letters. So far our tradition has been of essence with all its attitude of disinterestedness, or feeling of *Vairagya*. Our poet Sochi Raut Roy extends *this* very attitude towards existence. He emphasises existence, and then takes us to a level of intellectual disinterestedness, thus giving a spiritual halo to the unspiritualistic content of poetry. This he does with a mastery over form and *rasa*, over reality blended with spiritual colour, over figures of speech with new lights and shades, over life of love in barren surroundings—infused with a craving to fly up in the face of all that are grim and dark, and above all, over Indian atmosphere with silvery linings around the cloud of a hazy but glorious past, marked with a rare richness of colourful

concepts, and in details of description and subtle carving.

(There is a throbbing note of frustration in the lines of the poet—with a sigh of grief for the past, with a mixed feeling for the present, but with a desire for a height to be attained with the weighty flesh and blood, and with a longing to enjoy the naked earth.) There is also at times something dreamy about his poems as well as every touch of reality and of life in reality, of glamour and grisaille, crispy words;—the art of the poet taking us through the gloom and joys of living, keeping us beside the life—the life with a capital L, and with all its possibilities, which lead us to the landscape where ‘Unknown is the spouse of Known,’ where essence is nothing but frozen existence, and existence the glow of life in frozen death and darkness. This clearly is the new role which the muse of the poet is likely destined to play, with the wealth of material soul of India inspiring the poet to a passion of creative consummation imbued with a spirit of intellectual disinterestedness born of forceful real existence.

SOCHI RAUT ROY—A POET OF THE PEOPLE

Prof. Prabodh Narayan Singh, M.A.

TODAY I take the opportunity of introducing to the Hindi world one of the great contemporary poets of India. He is Shri Sachhidananda Raut Roy, or more popularly known as Shri Sochi Raut Roy. Still in his thirties, Shri Raut Roy has been able to carve out a permanent place for him in the niche of the great poets of our country.

Some of the poems of Shri Raut Roy have been translated into English by many reputed personalities of India, such as Sjt. Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the younger brother of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, and others, and have won for him an international reputation in the English-speaking world, far beyond the shores of India.

It was in the year 1942, that Shri Harindranath Chattopadhyay himself one of the foremost poets of India, introduced to the world the inspiring poems of Shri Raut Roy which were till then confined to the literary sphere of Orissa. Sjt. Chottopadhyay translated into English the little epic of Raut Roy, entitled "Baji Raut"—a book which had awakened Orissa from its age-long slumber by its fiery message of patriotism and love for the people. The English translation done by Sjt. Chattopadhyay was published in the year 1942 under the title of "The Boatman Boy and Other Poems" and the attention of all lovers of progressive literature was drawn to this young rising poet—a poet with a living message and abiding inspiration who was then but a young lad of

barely twenty-four. Since then Shri Raut Roy has drawn the continued attention and interest of the wider reading public beyond the linguistic frontiers of Orissa.

Now it is a matter of gratification that this young poet has attained international fame as an outstanding voice in the present literary landscape not only of Orissa, but also of the whole of India. The literary works of Shri Raut Roy have come to be accepted not only as landmarks in his country's literature, but also they are acclaimed as powerful instruments giving expression to the authentic soul of a people now awakening to new life and new historic responsibilities.

He is rightly acclaimed as a poet of the people—the poet who inspires millions of his countrymen to reach new heights of consciousness and self-sacrifice for the cause of the people. His is the voice which speaks for the voiceless millions who are deprived of their legitimate growth and dignity. His is the prophet-tongue that announces the advent of a new golden future for Man—the free and fuller man rising like a red sun on the ruins of a broken past befouled with “exploitation and tyranny.”

Shri Raut Roy is verily the poet of the average humanity—the humanity that is a dynamic living force and not merely a prey to a sickly and defeatist fatalism that leads them to reaction and inactivity. He knows the scars of life—its joys and sorrows and frustrations and throughout his writings we hear the wing-clappings of a human soul that is a-thirst for new horizons and burning with a ceaseless passion for marching onward and sunward. He is the singer of

a life in bloom—of the life immortal, and of the life that is yet to be. He is the painter of the immense possibilities of human life. Death cannot be the end of life. Life like an unending forntier line extends beyond the frontier-gates of death. To him life is the end of life and life begets a greater life till man reaches the acme of perfection. To him life is but an eternal process, an unceasing becoming that fulfils itself every moment till it reaches the highest point of fulfilment. The classic message of Isha Upanishad :—"Oam Purnamadah Purnamidam Purnatpurnamudachyate" runs throughout his writings.

The little martyr of barely twelve who was killed by Imperialist bullets symbolises this triumphant life-spirit and the poet sings of him—

"Life could not keep him
Enslaved, captive,
Could not hold him with its lure of colour,
With its river-musics,
With its twilight-hush and morning-wonder.

"Death split in sudden dread
And made a straight and sudden path for him :

"Lo, Death has made
Out of this young life's insignificance
Each man's significance"

(Red Flower)

Again he sees in the death of the hero a red-flame of heroic sacrifice, for he sings :—

"To bullet-showers and bayonet-thrust
 He gave himself as an offering.
 Red Flower of flowers !
 One of the choicest flowers of Indian dust !!

"Your very death is loud with life
 With future liberated life
 With life a flaming carnival of freedom !"

The chaos and disintegration of the present cold-war world are amply expressed in the verses of Raut Roy. For example, in his *Balance Sheet* addressed to a statue of a soldier killed in the last world upheaval, we find a complete imagery of the present state of chaos and defeatism :—

"A dead warrior
 A cold mastiff,
 Balance Sheet of the Twentieth Century.

You and we can perhaps never meet
 You are a handful of dust
 And we are determined to die.
 You've lost in an Orpheus moment
 A century's titan gains,
 We're to be killed by our own hounds
 With the click of an Artemis-switch,
 To-day or may be any other day
 In an ionian fire....."

The fine integration of symbols of Orpheus, Artemis and Actaeon's hounds from Greek mythology lends a beautiful symbolistic atmosphere to the poem, in the context of the present-day world tension.

Or

“The darkness grins :
a cold inane smile ;
Meaningless and erratic,
like the giggle of an
ebony-coloured barbarian girl”
(‘The Fisherman’)

These are typical symbolism and imageries characterising his later poems that breathe an unity of faith in life,—mundane and divine.

Brief Life-Sketch

Shri Raut Roy was born in Orissa some thirty-eight years ago in a well-to-do family. His father was a leading lawyer at Khurda in the District of Puri, besides being an avowed Congressman and a well-known political figure in the District. He was later adopted as a son by his father’s elder brother as the latter had no male issue. While a tender boy of 15, Raut Roy gave up his studies for some time to join the national struggle for Freedom. His first book called *Patheya* was published in the year 1932 when Raut Roy was hardly fifteen years old.

Since then he has been writing profusely, in his own mother-tongue Oriya as well as in Bengali and English. He is the author of nearly 20 publications—poems, short stories, novels, drama, criticism. His versatile genius has found easy success in almost all the branches of literature and the present epoch in Oriya poetry is known after his name as *Raut Roy Era*.

Shri Raut Roy graduated in the year 1939

from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He was imprisoned several times in the British regime for his fiery writings and for the leading role he played in the people's upsurge in his country. One of his books of poems called *Rakta-Sikha* was banned in 1939 by the then Government and the press was fined Rupees one thousand for having printed it.

Shri Raut Roy has been associated with a large cotton textile Mill of Calcutta as its Executive Officer since the last twelve years.

The Government of India in recognition of the merits of Shri Raut Roy deputed him to attend the Social Service Seminars convened in Australia and New Zealand in the year 1952. Shri Raut Roy was accorded rousing receptions by the leading cultural organizations and literary figures of Australia, New Zealand, Siam, Ceylon and other South-East Asian countries he visited.

In the year 1945, Shri Raut Roy married Sm. Bhudevi, the daughter of the Zamindar of Gollapalli in Kistna District, Andhra (The Zamindar of Gollapalli is the brother-in-law of the Maharajah of Pithapuram and hails from the highly cultured and famous Rajah families of Nuzvid in Andhra.)

Raut Roy's poems embody the supreme realisation of the inner divinity of man, and deal with love, nature, patriotism and the present-day problems breathing as they do a rare lyrical grandeur. They reveal a powerful grasp of the technique and a high compelling quality that is only possible on the part of a truly noble poet.

In his poem *Nocturne* we find him completely merged in the intensity and mystery of the imper-

sonal Nature, and breathing a soul in the inanimate nature. His poems called *Apocalypse*, *Ecce Homo*, *Cloud-Burst*, and *Requiem* represent his spiritual outlook and philosophic approach. Full of neo-symbolism and highly imaginative technical devices, these poems bear ample testimony to the stirring personality of this young poet of India.

Many a critical estimate has been written and published by the leading personalities of India on the literary works of Shri Raut Roy. Many critical and appreciative essays dealing with the various aspects of Sjt. Raut Roy's works have so far been published in the *Bombay Chronicle*, *Bihar Herald*, *Patna*, *Kaiser-I-Hind*, *Bombay*, *Triveni*, *Bangalore*, *Observer*, *Orissa*, *Advance*, *Calcutta*, *Statesman*, *Calcutta* and a number of vernacular journals. Dr. Kalidas Nag, D. Litt., Shri Harindranath Chattopadhyay, M.P., Shri P. Sama Rao, Mysore, Shri K. K. Kaul, Prof. Priya Ranjan Sen of Calcutta University, Prof. N. Samant Rai, Prof. J. B. Mahanty and Prof. C. Behera of Orissa had written critical estimates of the poet's works from time to time.

Further, it is a matter of great joy that the collected poems of Sri Raut Roy containing the representative poems of Shri Raut Roy (1937-54) translated into English by some reputed scholars of India had been published very recently by the Modern Review Office, Calcutta-9 under the name of "The Boatman Boy and Forty Poems."* The wider reading

* "THE BOATMAN BOY AND FORTY POEMS" (1954 edition) by Sochi Raut Roy contains the collected poems of the poet, written during 1937-54. Translated by Harindranath Chattopadhyay and B. Sinha. Published by the *Modern Review Office*, 120/2, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta-9. Price Rs.6/-.

public of India will thus have an opportunity to go through the inspiring writings of this celebrated young poet through the common medium of English.

In the own words of the poet, his poems are not the luxuriant flowers grown around an ivory tower, but they are the products of the massive art-inspirations derived from the life of man, and he announces in a thunder-resonant voice :—

“To Man I inscribe my muse”*

*The Hindi versions of this essay was published first in the “Dainik Viswamitra, Calcutta, dated October 19, 1954, and in the Hindi daily “Amrita Patrika,” Allahabad, on 23. 1. 1955.

AN ORIYA POET SINGS OF PEOPLE'S HOPES AND FEARS

S. Sazzad Zaheer

“THE death of little Baji Raut demands
That you become interpreters of life
And sing of the dripping wounds, the
 weeping eye,
And of the vacant and disgraceful sky,
Echoing a whole people's starving cry !!”

Such is Sochi Raut Roy's message to our poets :
Roy is a young poet from Orissa who has given us
some remarkable poems in his book of poems entitled
“The Boatman Boy and Other Poems.” *

The theme of five major poems in this volume
is the heroism of a young boatman lad, Baji Raut who
was murdered in cold blood by the minions of a petty
Indian State—Dhenkanal—in Orissa, some years ago.
Rather than submit to the bullying of a gang of armed
police toughs, who demanded that he rowed them
across a turbulent river, when they were out on a
trip to arrest, torture and shoot down Praja Mandal
workers and their supporters, young Baji Raut, true
and heroic son of the people that he was, preferred
death. Roy's intensely moving poems written origi-
nally in Oriya, sing of this epic of patriotic martyrdom.
It is natural that the heroism, the courage and the
sacrifices of our people in their great struggle for

THE BOATMAN BOY & OTHER POEMS—by Sochi Raut Roy :

Translated by Harindranath Chattopadhyay.

Published in 1942 by BOOK FORUM

72, Harrison Road, Calcutta—9. Price Rs. 1/8.

freedom should inspire our young progressive poets. As the freedom movement of the Indian people grows in stature and attains new depths of intensity, we witness the emergence of a new people's culture : Artistic form is given to the whole people ; the common experience of all are particularised, transmuted and transformed and novel and beautiful shapes and designs emerge on the artist's canvas. In this way a true people's artist gives back to the people what he got from them, inspiration and all the joy which they can derive from a 'thing of beauty.'

At least the first five poems of Sochi Raut Roy, in the collection under review can be said to be eminently successful from this point of view. Take for example this simple characterisation of the young martyr :—

“.....Death has made
Out of this young life's insignificance
Each man's significance,
Freedom's unchallenged master ;.....”

Or, again, the following lovely lines :—

“O he is like a slender-throated bird
Which soars and sings
While round its flight all heaven is
 struck and stirred,
To a wide sense of wings,
Fire-tinged, unfettered, high !

O he is a bird of freedom now
Who rests no more upon the crooked bough
Of wasteful agony, but sweeps the sky :”

Here are old similes, but a new life has been infused in them ; there is a grace and freshness in them which truly reflects the renaissance of a great and ancient nation.

Let us hope that Sochi Raut Roy would be inspired to write more such poems, which would inspire our people to meet with courage the perils of the present situation when Fascist aggression threatens to destroy that which of all things we hold dearest,—the rich, colourful and grand culture of the people of Hindustan.*

* "People's War,"

Bombay,

January 3, 1943.

SOCHI RAUT ROY—AS A POET OF THE MASSES

D. Visvesvara Rau

A child of the new renaissance in Orissa and yet "less one of the children of our climes than of an age yet unborn" there arises Sochi Raut Roy, the poet and the "revolutionary," who has become even at the tender age of 27, "the voice of Orissa's voiceless millions." He is largely responsible for the 'great alchemical changes that are now taking place in the language of Orissa, which is being moulded by him to give expression to the authentic voice of a people now awakening to new life.'

He is markedly a poet of the huge multitudes of ill-fed and ill-clad human beings, of their great passions and aspirations which remain unrecognised by the established writers of the day. He is not a poet of the "Ivory Tower" or of the isolationist school which worship beauty in her secluded chamber. 'Art for Art's sake' is as much a myth to him as the entire negation or crucifixion of art for the sake of rigid utilities : His feet are firmly implanted in the solid ground.

As Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the translator into English of his Boatman Boy and other poems, has remarked, Sochi Raut Roy is a brilliant instance of the de-classing that has been taking place among the modern writers who have come face to face with reality. For he has exclaimed :

"Ye, lotus-eater Poets of our clime !
The world is taking on another shape

From what it wore in the grey bygone times
When song for you was just a fine escape,
For you, self-isolated in a swoon
Nourished on decadent dreams, that day is
done !!”

The revolutionary in him is quite evident
from —

“Now let your poet’s pen
Interpret the tragedy of men,
Interpret the black magnitude of sorrow
Which makes Today a tomb to close around
Tomorrow.”

Fighting all along single-handed against the false mannerism and escapist emotionalism of the neo-romantic school, on the one hand, and the die-hard tendencies of revivalism on the other, Raut Roy is now able to evolve, with success, a new line of progressive and dynamic thinking in the literature of his province. He is the much acclaimed leader of the young progressives in the realm of Orissan literature.

Accepted literary forms and evasive media of poetic expression are extremely distasteful to his revolutionary genius, which wants to get rid of placid ornamentation and to establish the vital significance, fertility and daring of human thought clad in its “heroic nudity.” The genesis-motive of the young poet is to create the necessary conditions for a virile, vivacious and massive literature of the people.

The wide range of his sympathy, his keen

"On a cushion of yielding rubber
 your dog lies safe and warm,
 His fur soft-white as the suds of soap,
 lends lustre to his form.
 Unlike its own our body is coarse
 with dust and dirt and toil,
 Coarse and hard and chopped and scarred—
 it would make your dog recoil.

* * *

"Weary and worn and tattered and torn
 like the sail of a boat in a storm !
 The milk is dry in the women's breasts
 which sag and droop so sad

* * *

"And their children wildly gnaw at clay—
 starvation has made them mad !"

Of his poems 'Baji Raut' has attained the full stature of an epic. His short stories, playlets and novels bear ample testimony to his intimate study of various aspects of human life. His "Masanir Ful," "Matir Taj," and "Andharua" are remarkable among his short stories. His poems are rich with a haunting melody and spontaneity. They are invested and charged with a music born of freshness and colourful buoyancy. There is a virile strain of manliness in them that reflects his dynamic personality. His Chitragriba is a wonderful novel challenging the forces of clay-footed romanticism.

Sochi Roy's poems in Bengali are being published in the leading Bengali journals. They reveal his fine command over the language.

There has not been a single upsurge or political movement of the Orissan masses since 1930 which has not been to a greater or less extent inspired by his poetry. Even illiterate cowboys and village girls cherish his lines on their lips and can be caught singing his tunes while at work or play.

Many of his lines are highly rousing, as for instance :

“This is no funeral flame, Comrade !
 No funeral flame, but freedom’s leaping flame
 To cleave the country’s darks of death and shame.
 A sacrificial mystery
 Of death turned life . . . Flame beyond price !
 Lo, you have offered unto history
 The century’s supremest bud of breath,
 Extremest symbol of high sacrifice,—
 Our Boatman-boy, proud conqueror of death !!”

Such is Sochi Raut Roy, the poet of the martyrs and the hungry, a dreamer of a ‘brave new world’ that is yet to come and will certainly come, for

... “Death is loud with life,
 With future liberated life,
 With life, a flaming carnival of freedom....”

* This article was published first in the “Triveni,” Bangalore, in March. 1944.

AN APPROACH TO S. RAUT ROY

(A Chronological Survey)

Prof. N. Samanta Rai, M.A.

It was in the year 1932 that a book called *Pathey*—the ‘Provisions for the Journey’—was published. It was a collection of lyrical poems. The provisions meant were the intellectual and emotional ones for the literary journey that the author foresaw and the author Satchidananda Raut Roy was hardly a lad of sixteen years of age. He was a student of Khurda High School and came under the influence of the then fashionable school of thoughts in the literary field of Orissa—“the Sabuja Sangha,” or ‘the Society of Ever Green.’ When the Irish Poet W.B. Yeats saw a gloomy picture of the world in 1921 and prepared the ground for T.S. Eliot to produce the “Waste Land” where the hallowness of a morbid society has been exposed in all its nakedness, a batch of young men in Orissa started the “Sabuja Sangha” whose aims and ideals were, to a great extent, the distant echo of “Sabuja Patrika” of Santiniketan in Bengal. Averting their faces from the actualities of the real life which had been torn asunder by the terrific First Great World War (1914-18), these young poets of the *Ever Green* sought to fly high up to a dreamy, imaginary land to discover and worship the high priestess of Poesy there. According to the interpretation of some, it is but one phase of mystical realization of intellectual beauty. These poets, during the twenties, had a strong sway over the Orissan

literary field, so the young aspirant Satchidananda Raut Roy naturally came under their influence. This young lad with heart full of exuberant high hopes prepared his "Pathey" for the future of his literary career though it can be well admitted that "Pathey" is quite foreign to his real mental calibre as would be seen in due course in this paper.

Though there is no new experiment either in verse-forms which had not already been introduced into this land long before the 'thirties,' nor any noble conception of poetry which will ordinarily catch the mind of the casual reader, "Patheya" shows, no doubt, a distinct landmark in the evolution of the poet's genius. A rebel spirit well closed up like the heated gas in a valveless glass struggling hard to come out to give its fullest expression, an immature mind groping in darkness, the outlook of an aspirant with high hopes of feeling great things of the world—this is the total of the impressions that this book created in the readers' mind. Though not the finished product of a genius, this book occupies a prominent place in the early work of the poet and its importance is all the more because the poet departs from the traditional outlook in his later works.

'Purnima' published in July, 1932, offers no novelty either in content or in its execution. A lyrical drama by its form, it establishes the full significance of the ultimate aim of human life through three distinct stages. In the first stage the man is lonely and his existence incomplete ; in the second stage he is coupled with a consort and this stage naturally ends in the third stage of fruition when they beget a child out of the union. The book

has got its name, "Purnima", as it idealises the completeness of life. Johanthan Mohanty in a short story, namely, "Bibaha Rahasya" (May, 1919) and Mayadhar Manasingha in a poem "Jathasthan" (November, 1929) had, in some form or other, developed this idea before "Purnima." But with Sochi Raut Roy, this lyrical drama shows his staunch devotion towards traditional idealism in life and literature at the earlier stage of his poetic growth which is conspicuous by its absence at the later stages, where the spirit 'Amabasya' (a free-verse written by him in March, 1936) and 'Homage to Amabasya' (An essay written in Dec. 1940) predominates.

The mystical idealisation of intellectual beauty that we often find in the various poems of the writers belonging to the "Green Group" is the predominating element in these two books, "Pathey" and "Purnima." Soon after, the poet in him could well realise this to be quite uncongenial to his temperament. A fresh stream of poetic creation flowed from the pen of our young poet and this is more akin to "Barsa Sandhya" (March, 1932); "Gruha Maya" (October, 1932); "Bila Lakshmi" (September, 1936) of Mayadhar Manasingha who, by early thirties, had earned a wide reputation as a poet in Orissa. By the middle of the thirties, S. Raut Roy emerged as the poet of the people in the literary stage of Orissa. But the path for this new phase of literary life had been very silently paved by his "Palli shri," a book of short poems depicting the village life. The Orissan villages with all their extremes of squalor and beauty, dust and dignity had first enchanted the "Palli Kavi" Nanda Kishore Bala who,

since the beginning of this century, had clothed them in verses of folk-lore tradition and folk metre. But S. Raut Roy, like Mayadhar, expressed them in poetic garb with local colour and people's language though using the traditional simile, metaphor and consummate skill in metre. His poems "Siva Puja" (July, 1932) "Pahili Raja" (October, 1934), "Palli Sakala" (April, 1933), "Zamindaranka Sandha" (1935) are only a few attempts in this direction. Of all the poems of this period, the "Pahili Raja" is the masterpiece of the poet's novel creation with all sorts of traditional poetic conventions. Raja Parba is a genuine Oriya festival for three continuous days widely observed in this whole land. The previous night of the first day of Raja with all the expectancy of the women folk awaiting the dawn, the gathering of the village girls to go to take early bath with their graceful, jolly movements to the village pond, their exuberant mirth and playfulness at various jocular and witty talks, after their return from bath their whole-hearted engagement in different kinds of appropriate games, are so vividly described in a language, expression and emotion of the villagers that this long poem, by the end of 1934 brought S. Raut Roy to the forefront of the then writers of Orissa.

"Pahili Raja" and a few other poems written by him at various stages of his poetic growth, but having the general theme of the village life have been collected in this book and so the various tendencies of the poet can be discerned in those poems.

It should not be out of place to mention that by the time of the "Palli Shri," the poet has not only

found the proper theme for his poetry to deal with, but also he was sure enough to stand on his own feet ; for the fumbling nature that we generally feel in his earlier works is absent in this book which, in some cases, shows the master creation of the poet.

The mystical pre-occupations that the poet evinces in his writings of early 'thirties' as inherited possession from some of the members of the "Green Group," disappeared soon from him like mist before the rising sun. After this, the poet turns his mind to the more realistic tendencies and traditions. This sharp departure from mysticism to the realities of life within a very short time, shows the nimble and never-resting temperament of the poet—a fact which will be more safely affirmed when we go to his "Chitragriha" period of life. By the time when the members of the 'Green Group' were seen descending from their distant eerie high land S. Raut Roy, a product of this literary movement was clever enough to shake off the shackles of this tendency that stands, in many respects, for abstract dream of happiness by solitary intellectual meditation, and prepared himself to chalk out a solution to the burning problems of his day. This, no doubt, leads us to a new phase in his literary career that we have to deal with in the next section.

Before we proceed to this period that extends from 1936 to 1942 we want to give some information that will be of great importance to understanding the works of the poet produced during this time. Between two Great World Wars there are two distinct literary movements in the world :—One is the literature of the nature of the "Waste Land," that

is, the literature of decay and despair, and the Marxist conception of literature is the other. The influence of the former is scarcely seen in the Oriya literature from 1921 to 1930. But the strong and deep traces of the latter are clearly noticeable in our literature since 1936. The factors for the favourable growth of this new element in our literature can be summarised in the following. Coming to global events, the 'thirties' were the years that witnessed Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the war in Spain, the spread of Nazi aggression in Europe, the outbreak of the Second World War which all combined together were a constant menace to the human happiness. With these came the Marxist theory of future hope and prosperity that attracted the sensitive minds of various countries and climes. It is significant to note that the whole face of the world literature underwent cataclysmic changes and they were essentially due to the new outlook brought in by Marxism with its philosophy of dialectical materialism.

If we come down to the Indian History of the thirties, we can find an atmosphere that has, in some respects, been responsible for the growth of the literature under our review. A saint like Mahatma Gandhi with bitter anguish and distrust has condemned the British rule in India as "Satanic" and 'a curse to India'. "I consider," says Mahatmaji, "that I would be less than truthful if I did not describe as satanic a government which has been guilty of fraud, murder and wanton cruelty, which still remains unrepentant and resorts to untruth to cover its guilt." Mahatmaji's historic march to Dandi on the 12th March, 1930 acted as electric

current in the hearts of Indian youths to jump into the fire of revolt against the colonial yoke of the Britishers. Lawless laws in the name of ordinances were promulgated and the leading Indian personalities were jammed behind the prison bar as an answer to their greatest fault that they raised their heads to speak what they felt about the British Government of that time. When processions and Hartals went on a wide-scale throughout India, Sochi Raut Roy, a young student of 15 years, plunged himself into the whirlwind of agitation, with the result that he was virtually expelled from the Khurda High School, where he was reading at that time.

Another event that, to some extent, shaped the literary career of our poet, was the organization of the Progressive Writers' Association in April, 1936. Its purpose is significant to note. "It is the sacred duty of all who love culture to join those forces in our country which are fighting for Indian political liberation and continuing their creative efforts and all their mental and moral resources towards the struggle for the Indian people's freedom." That the poems of the poet written during this period are coloured with this spirit is a recognised fact.

Knowledge of some of the events that took place in Orissa during the 'thirties' is also necessary for a correct appraisal of the poet's work. Due to certain historical and political reasons the details of which need not concern us here, the Oriyas before the early twenties were, in general, rather insular and circumscribed. It was Pandit Gopabandhu Das who first caused a stir among the Oriyas by his joining the Indian National Congress and carrying its message

to the people of Orissa. Further, the formation of a separate province on the 1st April, 1936, had suddenly opened a new vista of self-consciousness and freedom. Besides, the widening of the political outlook of the people, a cultural association, namely, "Navayuga Sahitya Sansad" with "Adhunik," a monthly periodical as its mouthpiece, was organised in 1935. This journal edited by the late Bhagabati Panigrahi, who had readily responded to the world events, avowedly declared in its first issue in May, 1936, to spread throughout Orissa the Marxist ideals in the form of poems, short stories, essays, comments, etc. It should be noted here that "Avijan," a book of our poet had been dedicated to the comrades of this "Sansad." It will not be wrong if we place before our readers the poet's life-sketch that we have obtained through the kind courtesy of Mr. Basudha Chakravarty of Calcutta. This life-sketch, we are sure, will be of immense help to understand the poet's works which have been predominated by it, all throughout.

S. Raut Roy took to politics earlier in life while reading in Khurda High School in 1930, and was virtually expelled from the school. Thereafter, he discontinued his studies for four years. Again he was admitted in the Puri Zila School. He passed Matriculation in 1935 from Brahmo Boys School, Calcutta, in the first division.

. He passed I.A. from the City College, Calcutta, in 1937. He was arrested in Calcutta in connection with a political case of Calcutta, ten days before his I.A. examination and was released on bail just in the morning of the examination day. He rushed in

a Taxi from jail to the Examination Hall and somehow got through the I.A. Examination.

He took leading part in the Students Movement, Kisan Movement, and the States People's Movement of Orissa during 1937-1942. His songs inspired the people and many laid down their lives with his songs on their lips. He participated in the Dhenkanal Praja Movement of 1938-39, where his flaming songs like "Mar Too Jete Gooli," gave a new life to the people. His book "Rakta Sikha" was banned in 1939 and the press that printed it, was fined Rs. 1,000/-. Sec. 144 was served on him banning him from making any speech. He was the Secretary of the Provincial Krushaka Sangha and a leading Congress worker at the same time just before his graduation in the year 1939 when he was a student of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and a leading political worker of Orissa simultaneously. He was sued by the then Government under Press Act and he was sentenced to pay either Rs. 250/- as fine or to undergo 2 months' imprisonment in default. He chose to pay the fine and saved himself from being thrown into the gaol just in the eve of his B.A. examination and appeared in the examination.

This study is only necessary when we find that the life that has been moulded by these events and the works that the poet has produced during and after 1936, are quite inseparable.

A cosmopolitan city like Calcutta offered greatest facility to our poet to run apace with the has been given to his tender heart when he saw the thoughts of his contemporary world. A rude shock

miserable plight of the city harlots, as a result of which he issued the bulletin No. 1 of the "Dipak Sangha."

In this bulletin, namely, "Prem O Panya" love as a mere exchange for few chips has been condemned downright. According to this booklet, the existing marriage system and the capitalism are the two major factors responsible for this degradation of human soul, in the society. This, no doubt, shows the poet's humanitarian spirit that we find in profusion in his late life.

Chitrakriya (1936) is a fiction of unique type published by "Dipak Sangha" of Calcutta. This fiction glaringly points to his change in outlook. It is full of various allusions beginning from higher scientific theories and philosophical speculations of the modern thought, down to the basic History and Geography. This clearly shows the receptive capacity of the young poet. There is no clear-cut conscious effort at characterisation which we normally expect from any novel worth the name. It is more a book of self-analysis where "Shauri" plays the role of a progressive man. Shauri, a full-fledged progressive man, and Ganesh, a love-worn-gaudy chap, are two main characters through whom the whole ideal of the poet's life is fully revealed. Ganesh is a foil of normal life in which he has been miserably stigmatised by Shauri and his party. The book decries downright the love-sentiment and holds it as an aberration to the normal healthy human mind. This attitude towards love is also a challenge to other traditional poets who always consider it as the only subject-matter for any work of art. In later years this idea has been developed by the poet in

poetic form in the poems like "Dui Path" and "Dui Dhara." A humorous poem, namely, "Biraha Colic" (1934), aims at the same thing.

Though Chitragriha lacks the finer touches of a matured hand, it can be safely admitted that it wins the heart of the readers by its humorous sketches spread throughout the book in abundance, by its novel way of expressing desired thoughts in dignified language. The movements of the young associates in this book clearly prove that the poet who is, by this time, full of new and progressive ideas, is preparing himself to jump to the fire of revolt and revolution.

The poet in Shauri has once declared "I am an Oriya-speaking man. This is my identification. I am a man residing in India. This is my address." This widening of the vision of the poet is more clearly established when Shauri says, "I am born from the womb of the twentieth century. Twentieth century is my parents." This view is also expressed in the poetic garb in a free verse, namely, "Barta" (Message—August, 1936).

"Messenger from the Main Gate of the Century,
 Message of the future, has brought
 Where possibilities of Life are vivid and life-like
 And where barrier of Wall does not exist.
 Awake, Awake the Human Child,
 Awake the Nara-Brahma :
 Rise up with the worldly knowledge.
 Be firm, and stubborn,
 Take righteous revenge
 For the eternal slavery you are put into."

This child of the 20th Century could realise in the core that the human happiness only depends on the establishment of the "socialistic society on an international basis."! A new era of wealth and prosperity is seen like the rising sun in the horizon. This will be facilitated by the entire breakdown of the bourgeoisie yoke which, in the name of race superiority, religion, caste, creed, etc., is constantly grinding the ignorant human child to his flesh and blood. Man is never born in bondage. But it is the selected few who oppress, exploit, persecute and harass the many. So is created a great gulf between Haves and Have-nots, rich and poor ; oppressor and the oppressed who under the veil of religion and political illusions, are to face the brutal exploitation. To pay the highest respect for Man in each individual means the establishment of the World peace.

Poems, both in moric metre and in free-verse-forms written by the poet during the period under our review are surcharged with this new spirit. Rarely before 1936 as in the case of a poem, namely, "Shramik Kabi" (September, 1934), we find this vision of the poet expressed in any of his poems. It is during 1937-39 that the poet poured forth, like a perennial spring, his new impressions and ideas in poems beautifully clothed in sweet music and lucid language, verses some of which are now collected in "Abhijana" (Expedition). In these poems, both in moric metre and free verse forms—we find a common note in all :—the utter disgust and revolt of a mind against the oppressors, expressed in very powerful even brutal language ; a siren call

to all the have-nots of the world, to rise against the exploiters ; welcome of a new Era represented by the rising sun ; showing of utmost respect to Man in each individual, and lastly placing himself as the first bugler to sing the songs of hopes and plenty.

Serious charges are generally levelled against these poems for their propagandist nature which, it is said, though appealing for a time, do not possess the spirit of eternity. A comparative study of all the verses written in moric metre, such as "Shramika Kabi," "Bandira-Bandana," "Hatudi," "Spain," "Exploited," "Food," "Gallows," "Bread," "Prison," etc., and all the poems written in Free Verse forms such as "Amabasya," "Dreadful," "Night," "Food," "Message," "Saharatalire Sandhya," "Mulia-Bhai," "Dehara-Bandana," etc., will convince the readers that they are composed with a definite purpose to propagate a definite ideal that has caught the thought of the poet. There is, no doubt, much of emotion, fire and fury, but less of poetry in them. Ideals, words, phrases, similes and metaphors are sure to be repeated here and there in such emotional poems like these. Besides, the poet is too much ahead of his contemporary Oriyas for whom these poems were meant. It is also said that his oppressed and exploited are mostly the Factory workers who are never seen in an agricultural province like Orissa.

We cannot prove these charges to be utterly baseless, but we are sure we should not minimise the importance of these poems. We believe, the conditions of Oriyas in Calcutta might have forced the poet to take up his massive pen for this. That these poems acted as electrical switch to the deadening

slumber of national consciousness and forcibly dragged us to feel a new life, nobody can deny. If this purpose is served, we think, the name "Expedition" is fully justified.

All the new thoughts that the poet has theoretically put in the form of slogans in "Abhiyan," are practically handled in some poems and short stories where his master genius is revealed without doubt. Though they belong to the period under review we are developing them in a separate section for the sake of our convenience.

(3)

Satchi Raut Roy, the son of the late Shri Prasanna Kumar Raut Roy,* the well-known law-practitioner and Congress leader of Khurda, carries his ancestral heroism and patriotism in his life. A heroic race, always ready to answer with the sword, and endowed with creative faculties in literature—Kshatriyas are ever known in the history of Orissa. The ferocious nature of this young rebel is beautifully expressed in a poem called "Beast" (1938).

"Where World's all amusements,
Dance to mock at Man's deep sorrows,—
Unfurling the banner of Death
There I rise as Bhairaba, the Dreadful.
Is pardon for him possible
Who laughs at Man?"

We see the full significance of this nature in "Baji Raut," a *Khandayat* boy of barely twelve, who

* He was adopted by his uncle Sri Sadananda Raut Roy as a son.

was shot dead by the troops of the Dhenkanal Durbar on the 10th October, 1938. People say that Baji Raut died, but Satchi Raut Roy made him immortal in his poem. On the other hand, we maintain that the human flesh and blood of Baji Raut were burnt as they would have been in their natural course, but the real Man in him which lay hidden as yet, was discovered for the first time by S. Raut Roy. The poet remarks that Baji is a force—"a mighty institution that inspires and vitalises a nation." The poet was addressing his message in his "Expedition" poems to the slumbering giants to rise; here at least is one slumbering giant that awoke.

"Baji Raut," a long poem, is not an eulogy in the conventional manner. This poem embodies the Man's greatest triumph over the evil forces of despots. The reality of the story described in the poems lends additional glamour to its sensational poetry and the Oriya literature is rightly proud of it. The ephemeral body of Baji was brought over to Cuttack from Dhenkanal and was burnt by the poet and his comrades. This direct and personal experience of the oppression of an autocratic Government enkindled by the circumstances that stood behind this incident, invigorated the "Rebel" and 'poet' in S. Raut Roy. A life-like stream of noble sentiments gushed forth like volcanic eruption from the pen of the poet. Critics opine that the Mandakranta Metre of Sanskrit is the most befitting one for the slow movement of the cloud that fascinated Kalidas to select it for his "Cloud-Messenger." This is also true for irregular verse pattern that S. Raut Roy has selected for the limpid and curbing movement of the

flame that consumed Baji's dead body. The unique and sustained music with the heart-born hatred for the oppressors can only be relished in the original poem of the poet.

This worship of Man or Woman in individual is also manifest in two of his famous poems "Shah Zahan" and "Asamapika." Earlier in 1937, the poet had said at the architectural beauty of "Konarak."

"Crops of flowers and the blue waves of the
dream are there,
In the dawn they bow their heads before the
golden rays of the Sun.
It speaks in the ears of the earth—
None has sung of the wound and insult of Man.
There beautiful art reigns,
It has not sung of the life of Man,—
What it should have sung . . . "

The same angle of vision we also see in these two poems. Taj is but the symbol of an Emperor's love for his queen, built with all the pomp and glory. Nobody knew what the woman in Taj felt and expressed about this earthly tomb. It is Raut Roy who conveys the heart-felt agony of this woman in these words to her lord Shah Zahan—"My Emperor ! Gold, diamond and Jewels are here, but not Mama-taj, the Woman." In the second poem also we find the same groaning spirit of the woman in Nandika, who in the hands of Radhanath Roy, lay buried under earth, unknown and unnoticed.

The applications of the new ideas the poet was imbued with in the 'thirties' and manifested to some

extent in the poems discussed above, are more glaringly visible in the short stories of the poet written in the early part of the forties. During 'Expedition' period the poet had trained his hands in a few short-stories, now collected in "Chhai." Most of these are not original stories, but adaptations from famous short story writers of the world, so the name of the book is "Shadow." Still his personality is stamped everywhere in these. But in his original short-stories, some of which have now found place in "Matir Taj" and "Masanir Phula," the poet has got the greatest opportunity to materialise his new view into action. Our blind faith in religion which is so deep-rooted in our nature, haunts us like ghosts and becomes the cause of our death and destruction (*Andharua*). Society and religion stand as barriers on the way in the matter of choosing the partner in life, with the ultimate result that a woman like Fatima had turned mad and died for her real beloved. (*Matir Taj*). A harlot demands recognition of her personality from her so-called lover who is outwardly attracted for her beauty. She deserts him when the woman in her is disrespected (*Kehi Nuhe*).

'Hand' shows how our people are deceived by the palmists who read our future. The "Masanir Phula" cleverly exposes the sad lot of a woman who, under forced circumstances, takes to illegal love and meets death ungrudgingly. The last sentence of a ferocious man like Jagu is more poignant, "No more, no more, Do not discuss about others. Does man understand man in a right way?"

This misunderstanding of man is the sole cause of social and personal discontent. S. Raut Roy, in

stories like these, has raised the burning problems of the day. These stories with variety of personalities and temperaments, run with restraint, and simplicity. A bitter indignation against fetid and effete society run by dead traditions and laws, is everywhere revealed in these. If the poet has reduced "Expedition" to a hand-maid of propaganda, it is in these short stories and poems that he has amply compensated for it.

We now come to the last phase of his writing which is novel for its form and techniques.

(4)

The greatest contributions of the poet after 1942 and onwards are his successful experimentation with some of the Verse-forms that still hold their sway in the literary field of Orissa. But before we proceed to deal with this aspect, it will be unfair on our part to completely ignore another side of the poet's writing, the poems of humour and satire—some of which are now collected in a book named 'Hasanta'. In the early 'thirties,' the poet had tried with some of the humorous poems, such as 'Horse Race in the Heaven,' 'Biraha Colic,' 'Subtraction,' 'Nagar Kanhu'. Poems of this nature are full of humorous situations and clothed in a gay language that rouses heart-bursting laughter.

'The Shradha Ceremony of Gopabandhu' a poem written during early thirties stands in the line with the poems written after 1942. Grimly satirical in spirit, all these poems expose openly the pretentious nature of some people who, under the garb of nationalism, exploit the ignorant people. The poems are all charged with a keen sense of social realism.

As regards other poems produced during this period, almost all of them are of anti-imperialist character in which the poet seems to be "up against the whole brute force of things-as-they-are." Though we clearly feel a decidedly changed atmosphere in the contents of the poems written after August, 1947, we are here dealing with both the periods under one head as the distinction between these two seems to us now quite negligible.

His real contribution in this period, as stated above, lies not in the spirit of the poems as it is in the verse-forms. Prose-verse popularly called 'Gadya Kavita'—the most detestable term to some of our old critics—was a novel creation by Walt Whitman in the 'Leaves of Grass.' Since then it has exercised a wide influence in all literatures of the world. It is an acknowledged fact that no writer before S. Raut Roy took this verse-form as a massive instrument to storm the fortress of Oriya literary traditions as our poet did with undoubted success. For the introduction of this innovation in our literature, the poet has been mercilessly criticised by a section of people. But inspite of all attacks and threats, the poet wielded his pen. His earlier critics in this direction will do well to open up any literary journal in Oriya to-day before they continue to hold their earlier opinions for 'free verse' has come to stay in Oriya literature.

In a free verse namely 'Table' (January, 1936) the poet has hinted indirectly the usefulness of this form of verse which we generally neglect. Rabindranath called his prose-poems (for example "Punasch") "rhythmic prose" as the emotion and music were predominant in them. The ear which has been

traditionally used to music in poetry, will, no doubt, find it very difficult to accept a form of prose passed in a new name. In some verses our poet has leaned more to prose than to the poetical spirit of the verse. This is more glaringly found if we proceed from 'Pandulipi' and 'Abhignyan' to 'Bhanumatir Desa,' where the gradual movement from rhythmic prose to the spoken language in verse-form can be distinctly felt. To fuse both the "Speech-rhythm" and "poetic language" together should, as declared by the poet himself, be the go of the new verse-pattern and we can safely say that he has been successful to a very great extent in his 'Bhanumatir Desha.'

The language of the poems has undergone a variety of changes in the hands of our poet. If we start from the 'Lohita' portion of the 'Pandulipi' to the 'Abhingyan' we feel that his poetry is more "obscure, unmusical, flouts tradition, breaks all rules, is pretentious, gibberish," charges which are levelled against 'Modern Poetry' in the English literature. Before we condemn our Modern Poetry we must bear in mind that we are not living in a society of the past. In a changed society where the sense data of the people are constantly taking different shapes, where the new scientific theories are widening the frontiers of our common knowledge, where we are moving forward with aeroplane-speed, it is no wonder that the modern poets will abandon the trite phrases, traditional simile and metaphors. Discussing about the contemporary poet, no less a poet-critic than C. D. Lewis remarks thus, "In a successful poem—a number of fragmentary, apparently unrelated experience, bits of poet's observation, thought-

reading, emotional processes, have been brought together in such a way that they lose their identity, their separateness and fragmentariness, and are absorbed into a whole—a delicate, complex organization which gives them meaning, and whose meaning for us is more than the sum of its parts.” If we more closely observe the tendencies of the verse-forms of the English literature, we cannot but admire our poet who has been greatly influenced by literature of the World.

We may still hold our view that the innovations like these are contestable in nature. Critics differ in their opinion in this. So without detaining our readers in these unsolved problems, we want to proceed to a book where all the poet's previous attempts seem to reach the climax of success.

‘Vanumatir Desha’ (1948) is the last published Oriya book of the poet. Its theme is simple, movements very little, but all beauty lies in its novel conception and its successful execution. Binota, an urban and sophisticated girl happens to contact healthy friendship with Taranga who has been completely taken into the natural beauties of his birth-place, Sundargarha. Once Binota had been to Taranga's house where they fell victims to the urge of flesh and blood. But temperamentally they are poles asunder. Binota hates rural life. Taranga detests town environment to the core of his heart. Neither of them is willing to overcome the aversion of the other in order to accommodate oneself with the other. The separation becomes inevitable and Binota sails for Foreign Study but with a broken heart.

Though there is a tinge of idealism in so far as it aims at the real union of the two hearts, this book, in one respect, strikes hard at the reality of the present world situation. With the march of the scientific progress, the whole world has been divided into two entirely different camps :—one is the town where life is artificial, the other is a village, where nature shapes the life of its inhabitants. Each has the glamour of life in its own way. This wide gulf between these two, creates two hemispheres, temperamentally incompatible with each other and constitutes a major problem of human unhappiness. As long as no suitable agreement between these two is reached, real happiness is a dream.

Another aspect of the book is the complete union of "Speech rhythm" and "Poetic language" at which S. Raut Roy was trying his hand since the "expedition" period. A poem of free-verse by nature, this book fuses these two elements in such a natural way that it holds the breath of the reader until he finishes it.

The book is full of symbolic expressions and thoughts. But this is entirely different from the symbolic language that the Surrealists make use of in their literature. Purely based on the Freudian dream theories, admitting the predominance of "Sub-conscious", Surrealism is nothing but one sort of escapism whose followers always revolt against a strong tendency towards realism. Dream-images which are indistinct by nature creep into the language of the literature to predominate. As a result, this language becomes as hazy and incoherent as a dream. But on the other hand, S. Raut Roy is a

staunch follower of "Social Realism" where the question of escape from the hard realities of life is impossible to arise. This realistic tendency can be marked throughout the book. Ultimately, its language is never abhorrent or repugnant. Words and phrases are very cautiously selected and used in appropriate places to suggest the right meaning and convey the desired effect. If the language is baffling, it is only on the surface. Think over it a while, the meaning will, no doubt, be clear. For clarification of meaning, no word is ever connected with dream images at all.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is to be pointed out that no exhaustive criticism of the works of S. Raut Roy has been attempted here. Only the general trends of thought and technique adopted in his works have been considered, and as far as practicable a chronological order has been maintained. However, all the published works of our poet written in Oriya have been briefly taken into account in giving an approach to Sri Raut Roy.

RAUT ROY THE PIONEER OF A NEW LITERARY MOVEMENT

Prof. C. Behera, M.A.

THE advent of the British rule in India brought about a tremendous change in its wake in the cultural horizon of India. The confluence of the best elements of the oriental and the occidental civilisation was responsible for the renaissance of Indian art, literature and religion. The Western influence acted as a great stimulus to literary creations in our country. The new forms and techniques of literature, the simplicity of diction, the passion for common humanity and a new treatment of nature stirred the almost stagnant pools of many provincial literatures of India. At such a moment Radhanath Ray in Oriya literature acted as the harbinger of all the new influences in literature. Phakiramohan. Madhusudan, Gangadhar, Nandakishore and Chintamani Mahanty, etc., are the contemporary litterateurs of this age in whose hands the Oriya literature underwent a novel change and flourished in many ways.

Within the scope of this modern age again, we find different literary groups like the 'Satyabadi Group,' 'Sabuja Group' and 'Bharati Tapovana Sangha,' etc., who have enriched our Oriya literature by their own productions. The 'Satyabadi Group' was formed with the great personalities of Orissa like Utkalamoni Gopabandhu, Pandit Nilakantha and Pandit Godavaris, etc., who had the ambition of propagating patriotism through the medium of literature. The propagation of patrio-

tism through literature, giving a creative impulse to the nation and synthesising humanism with high order of poetry are the most important and characteristic features of the 'Satyabadi age.' These are found in the writings of Utkalamani Pandit Gopabandhu who may be taken as the representative poet of this group. The nationwide Swadesi movement had also given profound inspiration for the flourishing of this literature.

Then we find the poet Kalindicharan, Baikunthanath, Annadasankar and Raut Roy, etc., in the 'Sabuja age' and Dr. Mayadhar Mansingha, though he does not belong to it, is a contemporary of the poets of the 'Sabuja Group' and he is a poet of this 'Sabuja' trend in literature. The 'Sabuja age' is mainly the age of lyricism in Oriya literature and the trend of thoughts is mainly romantic and revolutionary in character. In the poetry of these Sabuja poets we find a unique combination of escapism, mysticism and symbolism. Still in some of the poems of this age we notice a realistic and revolutionary outlook. The poem 'Puri Mandir' of Kalindicharan and 'Uma' of Baikunthanath can be cited as the glaring examples of such poetry. Within or outside the scope of this age we find the talents like Kalindicharan, Baikunthanath, Mansingha, Raut Roy, and Garnaayak, etc., who have enriched the modern age of Oriya literature by their works.

Raut Roy when compared with the other distinguished poets of this age unquestionably emerges as the greatest living poet of the time in Oriya literature. His many-sided genius finds complete and full expression in the rich variety of his creations, in

his masterly representation of Oriya life, his great innovations and experiments in prose-verse, his novelty of imageries, the freshness of his vision and thereby the lead that he has given to his generation. He can be given the sobriquet of a "hero" in the Oriya literature in the words of Carlyle, as he has shown the light and guidance to many artists of his time. He has left almost no branch of literature untouched and has touched nothing that he has not adorned. Even in his feeble attempt to write a novel as we find in 'Chitragriba' he has not followed the beaten track and has created something new of his own. We may grudge to award it the title of a novel but the newness and freshness of treatment of the common theme of life, the pungent satire, irony, rollicking humour, parody of the romantic view of life and finally the exhibition of the vast scholarship of the writer simply enchant and charm the reader when one goes through it.

Phakiramohan was the first novelist who delineated in his short stories and novels the true picture of the rural life, the dreams, desires and aspirations of the villagers, their sorrows and joys and, their sufferings and humiliation.

We get a living and realistic picture of the social life of Orissa from the different works of Phakiramohan. We also get the same picture of the rural life of Orissa from the poems of Nandakishore Bal who is a contemporary of Phakiramohan. Nandakishore is known as the "Palli-Kavi" of Orissa. But we get a one-sided picture of the bright and sunny aspects of the life of the common people in the writings of Nandakishore. A village as seen through

his poems is a village of the poet's dreams and hence his picture of the village was ideal and not realistic. He has not shown us those aspects of village-life that are gloomy and unpleasant or its conflicts and like Phakiramohan he has not been able to show us how the village-life is the centre of negligence, suffering, humiliation and tyranny of the rich and the privileged few. None after this age did try to picture the life of the rural people either in the succeeding 'Satyabadi' or 'Sabuja' age. Raut Roy is the only contemporary poet who has given the true and a realistic picture of the rural life in Orissa in his poems and every poem of his "Palli Sree" bears testimony to this fact. Like Nandakishore he has shown us the sweet and pleasant elements of the village life and side by side the dark and unhappy sides of the rural life. We get in his poems the true picture of the sufferings and sorrows, wants and humiliations of the villagers and two of his poems "The Zamindar's Bull" and "Rangoon Passenger" embody this spirit. So, primarily Raut Roy is more known in Orissa as a "Palli-Kavi" than as a progressive and revolutionary poet. The trend of poetry of this "Palli-Sree" has inspired many young and promising poets of Orissa to write poems on rural life and among these young poets the names of Gopinath Behera, Durgamadhav Mishra, Satyananda Champatiray, Achyutananda Pati and Kumari Tulasi Das, etc., stand foremost. His whole life has been a mutiny against the ills, oppressions and exploitations rampant in society. His literary works have been instrumental in purging our social life of filth, and dirt and they have served as great weapons in the

social struggle. "Palli Sree" stands as an emblem of all that are lovely and colourful in the village life. Raut Roy's love of the common men, and his sharing their joys and sorrows again blossomed forth into superb forms in his progressive and revolutionary works. He is the greatest humanist of our time in Oriya literature. He has laid bare many of the obscure aspects of the rural life which are commonly hidden from the gaze of the intellectual elite. His 'Baji Raut' is a classic example of his deep and penetrating insight into the common life. His revelation of the unconscious levels of human mind in the study of the life of this wonderful boy stands unsurpassed.

Besides his outstanding contributions to the poems on rural life, he has also contributed much to the revolutionary and progressive literature of Orissa. He revolted against the visionary idealism, 'ivory tower,' and romantic exuberance of the poets of the 'Sabuja group' and brought about a new innovation in the spirit and form of Oriya literature. He has introduced a new dynamism in the present age. The path for him was paved by the poets of the 'Sabuja group.' Some poems of Kalindicharan and Baikunthanath and specially Kalindicharan's famous novel 'Matir Manisha' stand as an eloquent testimony to the stream of realism running in the Sabuja literature.

The proletarian age striving for the establishment of a classless and casteless society was waiting so long for a robust poet like Raut Roy. Raut Roy heralds a new age in Oriya literature by giving a clarion call to the workers and peasants and the millions of toiling population "who have nothing to loose but their chains" to unite and struggle for es-

tablishment of a classless and casteless society in the teeth of the opposition of reactionary class. Each and every poem of his "Abhijan" is a messenger of this historic call. He has sung :—

"Oh the workers, abandon fear

Sing you all the victory of the suffering soul."

(‘Workers’ Poet’—Abhijan)

He has tried always to expose the crimes and follies of the aristocratic class and to awaken the consciousness of the workers and the exploited. His progressive outlook is reflected in all his works especially in "Baji Raut," "Pandulipi" and "Chitragriha." He has mocked at the dreaminess and the romantic effusions of the preceding poets and has sung,

"Oh the escapist Poets

Where can you fly shattering the bonds of this
earth ?

Where shall you hide yourself ?

Can you break so strong a tie as of this earth ?

Where you O timid shall seek refuge ?

Could you feel secure in your ivory tower ?"

(Baji Raut)

In his poem the "Padmabhuk" (the lotus-eaters) we find the same trend of thought and also the clarion call to the poets :—

"The pink path of the earth vanished at the
dawn of the new effulgence of the sun

The new life bursts forth in tears, toil, and blood."

Raut Roy has burnt incense at the feet of the

great American poet Walt Whitman and has accepted his ideal of a hero. His novel 'Chitrageeta' contains some characters who serve as the spokesmen of this ideal. Walt Whitman's oft-quoted aphoristic statement, "I am the teacher of athletes he most honours my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher" finds supreme illustration in the speech and activities of some of the characters of his novel. Souri and Gagan, the two outstanding characters of this novel, live up to the ideal of Whitman's hero. Whitman's ideal hero is "first rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail to skiff, to sing a song or play on the banjo, preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with smallpox over all and those well tanned to those that keeps out of the sun." Raut Roy has preached this ideal in his book 'Chitrageeta' as the greatest need of the hour. He has made a fool of 'Ganesh' the embodiment of all romantic folly and wildness and has made him appear absolutely ridiculous and laughable. His scintillating humour and wit in the speeches of the different characters take away much of the edge of his satire and irony. He has also endorsed Whitman's ideal of literature. Whitman's significant statement "Comrade, this is no book, who touches this touches a man" can be placed as the prologue to almost all his poems. His humanism coupled with his sense of realism are evident in these lines,

"I am no professional singer,
When you touch my printed book
You touch a human heart,
Human life gets mirrored in every poem of mine."
(*'Rajajema'*—Pandulipi)

Raut Roy is not only the first exponent of progressive literature in Orissa but also he is the first poet to introduce prose-verse in Oriya poetry. Though he had to face a lot of vehement criticism for it, now most of the distinguished and young poets of Orissa are using prose-verse while writing poetry. It is an indubitable truth that the modern age is not an age of lyrics nor the society which supported the lyrical literature is in existence. The artist's mind is in a state of confusion because of the modern conflicts, scepticism and the volume of baffling questions staring him in the face. Besides this, the artist's spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, and his original thinking are arrested when put within the restrictions of rhyme and rhythm. So the prose-verse is the most natural and inevitable medium of expression of modern poetry.

Raut Roy's images have been so striking and startling in nature that they have shocked some of the diehards in literature and there has been a storm of protest from the side of the highbrows. Most of his imageries have been drawn from the real day-to-day life and nature. They help to make his pictures vivid, real and pointed. His comparison of the pale whiteness of moonlight with the fading whiteness of the foam of soap or with the whiteness of the turban of the stewards have become oft-quoted examples in the literary criticism of his poetic images.

His contributions to Oriya short stories is no less significant. The short stories of the "Masanir Fula" (the flowers of the grave) are of a very high order and extremely illuminating. Each short story

is a mirror of Oriya life. His inimitable humour and biting satires are among the greatest assets of present-day Oriya literature. His importance as a humorist can not easily be brushed aside and the poems of "Hasant" bear evidence to his power of creating genial humour.

It is my conviction that if his works are properly translated into English and other Indian languages, he will easily rank as one of the most creative artists of our time in the Indian literature and he will be the recipient of great honour and high appreciation from the critics. Much of the fire, verve and heat in his works that he produced as a child of the revolution may go unheeded and may leave many patriotic souls cold in course of time, but the grace, the beauty, the elegance and the novelty of his style, the keenness of his studies of life, his poignant humour and his literary experiments will certainly have a claim on the gratitude of the posterity.

It is very difficult, indeed, to give a critical estimate of the total corpus of the works of so great a literary luminary in the firmament of Oriya literature within the scope of a short article and more so when the artist is in the process of making and possesses immense possibilities and potentialities of growth. We in Orissa have very great expectations from him and look forward to the day when his influence will be warmly welcomed by the litterateurs of our country and Sri Raut Roy will grow to be an institution rather than remaining simply a personality.*

* The Hindi Version of this critical estimate was published in the Pujadevali Special issue (1954) of Dainik "Sanmarg," Calcutta.

SOCHI RAUT ROY AND "PALLI-SHRI"

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QUEER it may appear that Shri Sochi Raut Roy should be estimated with reference to his "Palli-Shri." True it is that he is a reputed writer of many a work and he has successfully tried his hand at producing different forms of literature like poetry, prose, and short stories with even casual contribution of essays to different periodicals and journals of Orissa. He has also been brought home to the literary mass of our country and even to the literary public of India and abroad through "The Boatman Boy," an English translation of his immortal poetical work *Baji Raut* in Oriya. Sahid Baji Raut has been made immortal for ages through him and I am afraid, it may appear paradoxical that Sochi Raut Roy will remain ever immortal through his 'Baji Raut.' Well, the business of this essay may, therefore, appear strange to the reading mass of his works and stranger still to a close critic of his, who would, I believe, like to estimate him through his *Baji Raut*, *Pandulipi*, *Hasant* or *Chitragriha* or even through his brilliant short stories of *Masanir Phula* or *Matir Taj*. I may be excused if I point out at the very outset of this essay that "Palli-Shri" is a collection of short poems written by the poet at short intervals of his life. But compared to other poetical works of his, this collection of poems shows a definite difference in the poet's technique. A reader of his *Pandulipi* or *Baji Raut* or *Bhanumatir Desha* or *Hasant* will, I am sure, miss the writer very much in his *Palli-Shri*. It will, therefore, be interesting and useful to observe how Raut Roy has proved his

best in writing short poems describing village scenes embodying the beauty of day-to-day rural life and the grandeur of village festivities of which he had been a close associate during his childhood days.

Away from the city life full of cares and confusion, Raut Roy had the fortune of leading a peaceful rural life in his boyhood. He was born and brought up in the village of "Gurujang" in the neighbourhood of Khurda town, the headquarter of Khurda Sub-division in the district of Puri. The village in which he had spent his early days had left on his mind a firm impression and he has so skilfully translated into words the images which he carried in his mind, at casual intervals of his life that one at once feels the irresistible urge of nostalgia after going through his poems.

This book "Palli-Shri" contains ten poems and it will be useful to acquaint ourselves with each of the poems in order to appreciate them and to do justice to their contents.

The book begins with the poem entitled "Chhota Moro Ga'nti." The name at the very outset indicates that the writer starts to write on the little village in which he was born. Let the beginning stanza of the poem speak for itself :—

"Chhota moro Ga'nti
 Bhugol pothi patare pachhe nathau tara na'nti.
 Matira sei saraga mora
 Seithi achhi mo' sathi-ghara
 Jaliba puni seithi seshe
 Mohori chita nia'nti.
 Chhoto moro ga'nti."

While rendered into English, the poem will assume a pattern somewhat like this :—

The lovely little village of mine
 Let n't its name appear in any book of
 Geography,

It's my heaven of mud
 There I have taken my birth,
 And there at last will burn
 The last flames of mine.
 The little village of mine.

Born and brought up in a countryside village Raut Roy rightly observes that the little village in which he is born may not have its place in any book of Geography, but still it is a heaven of mud for him—the mud which has given birth to his body and which will embrace the last remains of his body after his mortal frame is consigned to the pyre. His little village lying probably in a negligible corner of the vast globe is to him a paradise of mud ! What more tribute to one's place of birth a sensible poet could pay ? And there is no end to his sense of patriotism. It continues till the end of the poem and it appears as if each stanza adds a new tone and texture to the poet's magnificent love for his dear, little village. He goes on describing how he had played under the mango groves, how he had loved every leaf and flower of the trees of the surrounding forest. He admits that the natural sceneries of his village have been a source of inspiration to him and have, as it were, made him a poet. The lines :—



Social Rumi Roy at a Reception given at Bangkok *Siam Karon* (Mrs College) in Thailand, on January 12, 1952. To his right at the corner of the table is seen Principal Potovici. Back to camera: Hon. Heigunss Princess Phai Diksul and Sidiro Jazozo.



Sri Ravi Roy at a Reception given to him in Madras, on February 12, 1955 at Hotel Dasaprekash. Many leading journalists, writers, litterateurs and public men attended. The host Sri Krishna Sharma, Advocate, is seen at the background.

By Courtesy, *Daily Andhra Prabha, Madras*

'Jharana tara kalaje kabi
 Nayane dela rupar chhabi.
 Buhai dela sapana dheu
 Pathara buke nihati,
 Chhota mora ga'nti.'

'Her springs have made me a poet,
 Made my vision colourful,
 And have infused the rainbow hues of dreams
 In the stony heart of mine.
 The little village of mine.'

The poem is full of reminiscences breathing a sweet note of pastoral simplicity and permeating the mind with the fragrance and purity of a distant dream. It unfolds at the same time, a very realistic picture of the village life. The poet goes on delineating one after another, the minute pictures of a rural life with the portrayal of the village *Sarabarakar*, the village *Chowkidar*, the oppressive rich *Zamindar* of the village and the village old lady who is a family member in every house in the village ; and even the lonesome widow who stays at the end of the village and leads an austere life, does not escape the edge of his pen. He describes in an exquisitely beautiful manner all these familiar scenes and in such an objective manner that it seems as if the poet is narrating his own personal experiences and reminiscences of early life and the readers while going through the poems feel as if they are listening to the poet Raut Roy himself speaking to them by their side. This personal element vibrates throughout the poems and lends them a unique charm and grace

that are rarely perceptible in contemporary Oriya poetry. Far away from his village, and stationed in a different situation altogether, the poet remembers the place of his early life—the life bathed in the serene tranquillity of an Orissan village free from the din and bustle of the mechanised civilization.

The second poem “Palli Sakala” contains three scenes relating to the typical activities of the rural maids at the advent of dawn. The day dawns, and in the first scene we read the description where a village maid calls at the door of her friend to accompany her to the river bank to finish up their morning’s odd jobs and her friend replies from within :—

The girl knocks :—

“Will you not open the door O’ friend
Crow crows, your sound sleep does not yet
seem to fade.”

And her friend from within replies :—

“Why so early in the morning do you haste,
The full day is there my dear, it has just
dawned !”

It is a familiar day-to-day scene in the village. The day dawns and the village maids call each other from the neighbourhood and proceed together to the river bank or the village pond to finish their early morning’s odd jobs.

The second scene is all the more realistic and interesting. The poem describes a village morning scene when the step-mother calls the daughter to leave the bed, and to be prepared for the

day's toil. Let a few lines here and there picked up from the poem tell of themselves. It is difficult to make a literal translation of the pure colloquial Oriya in which the poems have been written. I am nevertheless trying to give a broad outline of the contents for those at least who might not be able to have access to the original text. Says the step-mother to the daughter as the day breaks :—

"Strange is your sleep, you do not seem to get up
yet.

Where does a girl you will find, sleeping so late.

* * * *

"Who has not got up till now, O where, tell me.

Can you get a groom at all to marry you dear,

To wake you up from the bed everyday

Who will arrange two maids for you, a Princess
that you are !

Sleep, let me go . . . "

* * * *

"Let your father come, I'll tell him, though I do
not want to,

Let him send his lass on the back of a horse, I
don't mind.

He only knows to which prince he will offer his
girl, wretched me !

How do I know his ways, I'm inside this hut
always !"

The relation of the daughter and the step-mother is known to everybody and it is only bitterer in the unsophisticated dark part of the villages.

The third scene of the poem unfolds the picture of a morning episode dealing with the talk between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law in a rural household. It brings home to every reader a true picture of the village life. The mother-in-law of the old school does not believe in imparting higher education to modern girls. She, therefore, attributes all blame to higher education for being the root-cause of her daughter-in-law's indifference towards the ordinary household duties.

“My son got ‘three degrees’ from the college, I didn’t mind.

But did I want that his wife too should imitate
him ?”

There was a day when the conservative section of our rural population could not welcome the Western method of higher education and it had created a sense of repugnant reaction in the mind of the womanfolk in the remote corners of the country. This familiar scene has only been faithfully depicted by Raut Rov.

There is no end to the accusations and allegations put forward by the mother-in-law. She deplors that her daughter-in-law should sit on a couch and play with a harmonium when she should engage in a thousand and one household duties that need to be done. But it is amusing to find in the middle of the poem the old lady suddenly change her line of argument and shifting her attack to the fault-finding neighbours who criticise her daughter-in-law for her up-to-date habits. She changes over to say that it was perfectly within her right to say in these terms

to her daughter-in-law but what have her neighbours to do with it and why should they interfere in their affairs and comment on the ways of her daughter-in-law to achieve no end ! Further, she says, "My daughter-in-law is mine. Can others in the neighbourhood stand comparison to her ?" And the poem ends with a note of reconciliation. The daughter-in-law is not to her estimate, nevertheless she is good, because she is her daughter-in-law, and things continue in this vein till the end when the old lady concludes by saying—"It does not matter if the daily duties are not attended to. After all it is none of her business to meddle. If the daughter-in-law neglected her own household, it is she who would reap the consequences, as her own days were numbered and she would only be too glad to leave the world. She is telling all these simply because she cannot afford to endure the sight. She would like to go to her father's house, let the children take their own way. She does not really want to speak and if nobody likes her talk, let them not. She cannot keep mum. "

The poet's sense of humour and skill at characterisation are quite significant throughout the poem. The whole poem breathes an atmosphere of realism. It is only an intimate observer of a village life who can produce such a poem.

The third poem "Palli Sanja" deals with the evening scene of a village. After having described the morning scene of a village, the poet now rightly proceeds to describe the evening. The day passes on, the evening draws nigh. The shepherd boy now brings back home the cows. The bells attached to

the necks of the cows produce a tinkling sound as the evening draws nigh. The shepherd boy is happy that he is returning home after the whole day's work. Cheerfully he plays on his *Dhurdka* (hand-made musical instrument) in his homeward journey. The evening flowers blossom forth in the courtyards. And the poet remembers the activities of *Bhagavat Tungi* of the village in the evening. He aptly adds a line here on the *Bhagavat Tungi* of his village through which he pays homage to the immortal poet-saint Jagannath Das, the author of the Oriya 'Bhagavata.' It would not be out of place to remember here that the poet Jagannath Das's 'Bhagavata' has left an undying impression on the minds of the village folk of Orissa and since centuries his 'Bhagavata' is being read and worshipped in a room set apart for the purpose in almost every village of our land. It is a custom with the villagers to assemble in the room in the evenings to listen to the immortal ethical lines of 'Srimad Bhagavata.'

Raut Roy though a man of the modern age is keenly alive to the traditions of the land. While describing the 'Bhagavata Tungi' he also remembers Bhima Bhoi's *bhajans* which are immensely popular in Orissa and are favourite with the uneducated masses of our country.

He goes on describing the 'Alekhya Sanyasi' who offers his last respects to the day's setting sun, farmers who return home with cartloads of ripe corn from the fields nearby, and the villagers who assemble around a fire to save themselves from the biting cold of the winter evenings and to make themselves comfortable. Poor, half-fed and half-

clothed as most of the villagers are, they have no other means to save themselves from the winter cold than gather round a fire. The dark night slowly drops in and the business of the village shops starts. The labourers back from their work, flock in numbers at the village shop to make their little purchases for the night and the next morning to follow. In some sheds the little ovens are lit and the smoke from the kitchens shoot up in white columns. Some think of cooking food at night while others plan to manage with the rice-gruel of the morning. The wretched poor life of the villagers has been very truthfully pictured so as to touch every reader's heart. The life which is so full of pains and pathos has naturally a longing for a little occasional pleasure and pastime and this has been described by the author when he goes on to portray the enthusiasm of the youngsters of the village for staging an opera performance when they assemble in their 'Akharaghara' (Club room) for the rehearsals. And then the poet goes on to describe the routined life of the village in the wake of evening and each new stanza supplements a new and living picture representing the village life in the evening.

From within the four walls of the village, the vision of the poet catches the glimpses of the vivacious nature all around and he gives a vivid account of the natural beauty of the evenings in the village.

The evening draws near and the boatman boy returns home rowing his ferry boat back. As he comes home back he brings with him some fish for food and not only he gets them, but also he

makes a garland of fish and wears it round his neck. And here again the poet says that the boy has in his hand an angling rod which he has purchased from the weekly market of "Baghei Tangi." Well, here is again an interesting moment. How beautifully he has brought in the name of 'Baghei Tangi', in fact, it is the name of a place near the poet's village, a name full of local colour and ringing with something intimately homely and familiar with every ear whether the place actually exists or not ! How could we account for it, if we do not agree that an intense feeling of life can enrich a poet with such ideals and soulful local images !

And the poem slowly comes to a close and the concluding lines are remarkable for the atmosphere of climax it forges. The poet rightly realises the deep-rooted faith in God reigning in the minds of the simple village folk, and he concludes by saying that there stands at the rear of the village, the temple of the village-Goddess ('Grama Devati') who is the strength, vigour and confidence of the poverty-stricken villagers and he himself does not hesitate to pay his respects at Her feet before he closes the poem.

"Sata Juhara ta charane,

Chhota ga'ntira vaya binashini mangala
pada sarane."

With these lines the poem ends. It is only the masterly pen of a people's poet like Raut Roy which can give expression to the many facets of village life in such a strikingly living and poignant manner.

The next poem "Bapa Bapa Pakaila Huri" ("Father ! O Father ! He shouted.") is entirely different from the three poems dealt with above. This small poem contains a minute's episode and catches a passing moment for its whole subject-matter. A traveller passes by the solitary canal bank in the mid-day, and sees a lady taking her bath in the canal which flows along the sugarcane fields of the Government agricultural farm. The little child of the woman waits for his mother under the shade of a tree on the canal bank. Curiously the child shouts as "father, O father !" at the traveller and the traveller slowly passes by to the great embarrassment of the lady taking bath. The unsophisticated but the clear and divine heart of a child and the gravity, strength and the pristine simplicity of the village women folk have been symbolically and elegantly represented by the poem in question. This poem, of course, unlike the earlier three poems, lacks in poetical images. But it is enjoyable in its transparent simplicity—simple but charming narration. The individualistic treatment of the poet makes it all the more interesting.

The next poem "Zamindaranka Sandha" deals with the fond hopes of a farmer at the sight of his ripe corn which have grown through his hard toil, followed by bitter frustration when he sees that all his crops have been eaten away and destroyed by the unruly bull of the village Zamindar. As he looks at his cornfields smiling with golden crops, the poor farmer Sadei Jena dreams of bright days ahead. Many things he imagines and within this wishful thinking comes the festivity of *Manabasa* which

is observed on Thursdays in the month of Mrigasira with the belief that Goddess Lakshmi the presiding deity of wealth and plenty if worshipped on these days, would favour the household with wealth. *Manabasa* is a very popular festival among the villagers in Orissa and the housewives make merry and prepare varieties of sweets on the days of observance ;—yes, through the recollection of the *Manabasa* festival, Sadei Jena thinks of his wife and of his longstanding promise to purchase for her a silver chain for her waist from the weekly market (*hata*) of “Bhalia-badi.” But the hopes of Sadei Jena are shattered to pieces when one day he comes to his paddy field only to discover that the crops have been all eaten away by the buffaloes of the Zamindar. With a broken heart, he returns home and his wife informs him that ‘Neta’ their cow had broken open the fences of the Zamindar and he had sent her to the ‘kanjia’ House. It would cost them nine annas to release her from there, and even if she cried before the Zamindar’s peon imploring him to let the cow free, he demanded from her seven annas as bribe. She had not even that much amount with her to pay and she did not know how to meet the situation.

Astonished, looked Sadei Jena at his wife. He kept mum for a moment and sighed deeply at last muttering within himself “that’s very good” ! The poem begins with a note of joy and ends in an atmosphere of pathos. The high hopes of the poor farmer fade out like bubbles in water and the poem depicts the heroic struggle of an Indian peasant who emerges finally on the canvas as a symbol of mute suffering, fortitude and human dignity.

The next poem "Rangoon Jatri" deals with a poor villager's travel of Rangoon to find out means of livelihood. The wife of the villager accompanies him and even their little baby seems to be bidding farewell to their native land with his parents. So do they all begin to make a move together and the poem begins with the scene where the departing villager points out to his wife the Railway Station by saying, 'There at the end of the village is seen the Station', and all of them cast a last glance at their native village.

Says the villager as they pass by :—

"Thia hua tike dekhinie thare
Ga'нку bulai akhi,
Sate auki pariba dekhi
Bahudi asiba kie se Janiehhi
Thakure acchanti sakhi.
Alo, ame para nirimakhi.'

The deep attraction of the native village is translated into words. The purport of the stanza is that the villager wants to enjoy the last sight of his dear little village. He is not sure if they will ever be able to come back to their native land again. They are poor people and being poor they have lost confidence in their future. The villager, therefore, completely resigns himself to God and Fate and tells everything in the name of God.

Look, how the profound sense of deep love for the village has been expressed in the lines :—

'Agare disuchi dalua bilare
 Chhatie uncha barda
 Tahin misaichhi mora harda,
 Tikie basiba Chal ta Chhaire
 An leutiba asha Chharda."

The conflict of hope and despair of their home-returning is now over and he is almost sure that they cannot return home. That is why he wants to sit down for a while by the fence of the paddy field which he had once watered by his own sweat. With this desire comes to his mind the sweet memories of the past. He looks at the cow of Raghu Padhan of his village, grazing on the field and he desires to lull her before they get away from the spot. He hears the music of the shepherd boy from a distance and all these revive his past days and seem to act in him like a magnet for he feels like being attracted by his deeply loved native village.

Sweet memories of the past fade away, as he hears the whistle of the incoming train. He becomes conscious of his journey to Rangoon. He thinks of the Station Master, the booking clerk and the T.T.I. who would demand some bribe. The wife of the villager an unsophisticated simple rural soul as she is, seems to feel nervous at the thought of leaving her country and going away to a distant foreign place. The husband gives her consolation and promises his wife to have a little patience till they reached Rangoon and with the coming of brighter days for them, he swears to get her ornaments made of silver in no time. He is glad that the apprehension of the village Zamindar will be no more there and

that both of them would be happy with the little earning that he will make there.

The next poem "Pahili Raja" deals with a festival of maiden girls, so popular in Orissa. It is commonly known as 'Raja Sankranti.' The Oriya girls observe this festival with due pomp and splendour. The girls get up early in the morning, take their bath, dress up elegantly, and get ready to send presentation of cakes and betels to their friends, relations and neighbours.

The girls have many new ideas in their mind and in a joyful atmosphere imbued with hope and expectations of merry-making on the occasion ahead, anxiously enough they sleep and spend the previous night.

When the poem begins the poet gives in an objective manner the description of a girl sleeping, as the day dawns, and the writer goes on to speak of the girl's request to her old relations to wake her up early morning, but unfortunately she sleeps too long and even the dawn does not break her sleep and a little drizzling outside prolongs her sleep and possibly she does not like to get up.

With a few descriptions relating to some other girls of the village the writer passes on to describe "Pahili Raja."

So does the festival of 'Raja' come as the harbinger of all pleasure and gaieties. The girls spend the day as best as they could. They decorate their respective houses, put on new clothings, eat, drink and make merry as if there is no end to this pastime. The poet seems to be at a loss while attempting to give a realistic picture of the festivity. And the

day passes on, and fades out also the joy of the girls. The poet feels that the festival may come from year to year but it may not meet the same maidens as they are today. I am afraid, it will not be possible to quote the whole poem here. Each stanza of the poem seems to be a rival of the other. The poem is a unique creation of Raut Roy. It is acclaimed as his masterpiece which brought him to the forefront of the modern writers of Orissa, as early as 1934, when the poet was barely eighteen years old.

The next poem "Maluni" deals with an episode from a folklore of Orissa. A prince with his friend, the minister's son, takes shelter in the house of a *Maluni* or the flower-maid who supplies flowers to the Princess of the land. The flower-maid plays the go-between in the love game between the prince and the princess. The prince prepares garlands and sends them to the princess through the maid. The princess gives the maid snubbing in return. But 'inscrutable are the ways of woman's heart' and the minister's son whispers into the prince's ears that the princess has shown her inclination towards him through snubbing the flower-maid. Such are the ways of love and the lover understands his beloved better. At last a day dawns when rumour is afloat that the princess is missing from the palace. To the entire astonishment of everybody it is brought to light that the prince of a neighbouring country who was a visitor to and a sojourner in disguise in their country has now married their princess in his own kingdom which lies south to their country. The beauty of the poem is that it echoes the

elegance and sentiment of a ballad. In a sense, we can take it as a folk ballad, because stories of this kind are prevalent in the villages and they are alive till today in the memory of our grand-mothers who lull their children to sleep by narrating the stories. The *Maluni* has been painted as a cent percent human being especially when she bemoans her fate on being tortured in the hands of the attendant maids of the princess and being alternatively compensated by the prince who readily gives her a golden necklace or a precious ring at the suggestion of his friend. In the last few lines she expresses her mixed feelings of satisfaction at the event of the princess being married to the prince, but at the same time we hear her complain about the little arrear of rent which the prince could not clear off before eloping away with the princess at dead of night in a hurry.

"Shiva Puja" the last but one poem of the book deals with the festive night of 'Jagara' which is a very important festival consecrated to Lord Shiva. The women come to visit the temple of Lord Shiva on the night of 'Jagara.' The description is very life-like and pleasing. It deals with their peculiar dresses, and their eagerness to see the deity and to put their supplications before him. The second half of the poem deals with the prayers of respective women of the village. One desires a good groom, another a little of wealth, and the third one cries in bewilderment for she has not heard from her husband who had gone to Rangoon in search of a livelihood long before. So do they all say their prayers and the silent stones of the temple record their secret heart-beats in

silence. One cannot overestimate the close observations of the poet who has so keenly felt the pulse of the rural womenfolk and so clearly brought out their psychology in the small compass of the poem here.

The last poem of the book is 'Grama Smashan' or the village cremation ground. The book opens with the poem *Chhoto moro ga'nti* and ends with the *Grama Smashan*.

Time passes on and embracing the last remains of the villagers who are no more, there at the end of the village, rests silently the cremation ground. In his own exquisite way, the poet describes the sight of the place and the common belief of the villagers that in the banyan tree close to the burial ground, lives a witch. Very realistic and playful are his concepts and I am sure, each one of us who is a close associate of village-life, must have felt how deeply the villagers believe in a spirit dwelling somewhere in a gigantic tree. The poem ends with a touching note of solemnity and silence. The poet offers his prayers to the cremation ground before he calmly closes by.

We have already acquainted ourselves with the contents of "Palli Shri" and also have discussed its salient features that bear testimony to Shri Raut Roy's rich imagination, clever delineation, powerful expression and his close observations of rural life. We have now got to concentrate our attention on an evaluation of the poet's language and style.

The poetic diction in almost all the poems has been quite befitting to the subtle delineation of the various pictures of rural life. The language is simple and forceful and colloquial and has proved to be

astoundingly successful as effective media of expression. The men and women in the poems talk as they would talk in their day-to-day life ; and the beauty of the poems lies in the fact that the poet by introducing a robust realism in the conversation of the rural characters, has been infinitely successful in maintaining the poetic tension and also revealing the psychology of the rural people in its true colour. The idyllic breath of the simple village scenes permeates through every poem and one feels almost a pastoral tranquillity pervading the atmosphere of the poems.

Different poems of the book have adopted different metres and hence the monotony in reading them has been wisely eliminated.

A glaring point in the poet's treatment we should not forget to note, is the technique of personification of the birds and bees, trees and flowers and the inanimate objects of nature—infusing in them a life of their own.

“Ranga Manikara nali tanu chumi

Sonita Kardhiehi Bhanar,

Kasha fula tenu tardi die taku

halai ta dhala chanar.

Nahni nahni bani vasita,

Nidhubana ase Nali karniara sirna ganda

hue ghasita....”

The flowers of *Ranga Manika* and *Nali kaniara*, and *kasha* have all been personified vis-a-vis a bee who appears to be drunk. The love plays between the bee and the flowers have been described with deft skilfulness. The *kasha* flower turns out the

honey-drunk bee wielding her white tail and saying 'no, no' to him as the latter had bit the lips of red *Manika* too hard causing blood come out of them.

Even the dark formless silhouettes are not without a flash of life. In the poem *Bapa Bapa Pakaila Huri*, the poet sees life even in his own shadow, and paints it as making obeisance at his feet when the sun touches the meridian point in the mid-day hour.

“Muliae ferileni kamu,
Nija chhai goda tale munda noin
Karijae chhamu.”

In absence of a clock in the remote villages, midday or 12 O' clock in the noon is indicated by the facts that the workers are returning from the fields to take their midday meals and the shadow touches one's feet as if it is bowing down to the person in obeisance. In the poem *Grama Smashan*, we again come across similar lines that corroborate the above point. Even a dry and horrible-looking burning ground which is the repository of the dead, is not spared from the ambient touch of life. Life is invested in it in a befitting manner to indicate the moods of disinterestedness and aloofness that are the inherent characteristics of such a place. The burning or burial ground is compared to a 'yogi' or a 'Sanyasi.' The river bisecting the ground looks like its sacred thread. The skulls represent the bowls in the hands of a 'yogi.' The tiny bits of bones are charged with some living metaphor or other and the bamboo pieces from the bier are compared with the

crutches used by a 'yogin'. All these bear eloquent evidence to poet's creative power and his power to infuse life in the dead and colourless objects surrounding him.

Everything blossoms by the magic touch of his pen, under an 'awning of All-Life' and seems to be radiated with a message of supreme beatitude and grace—with the message of "Satyam, Sibam, Sundaram."

In 'Palli Shri' Raut Roy emerges as a foremost poet and artist of the people. The language used in the book is the language of the people at large. The life depicted in the poems is the simple and colourful life of the people brought up in the traditions of a rich and massive culture which is the proud heritage of all. In a word "Palli Shri" represents the founding of a virile and fullblooded literature for the people, expressing faithfully their joys and sorrows, hopes and despairs and ushering in a people's literature that could reflect the ideal pattern of the life of the people in an unmistakable way. We pay our homage to Sochi Raut Roy for being responsible for the coming into being of such a literary style in Orissa.

MODERNISM IN RAUT ROY'S POETRY

Durga Madhav Misra, M.A.

The poems of Sri Sochi Raut Roy show a distinct development both in technique and subject-matter of Oriya poetry. His earlier poems, which follow a stereotyped path show a definite contrast to his recent and modern poems contained in the books like 'Pandulipi' or 'Abhignyan'. The earlier poems breathed an atmosphere of Romanticism with a subtle desire to revolt. He has not excelled in them very much because a revolutionary like him could not contain himself in an ivory tower of Romanticism. Hence those poems, though exquisite, are never his personal achievements so much as his later poems.

The doleful condition of the poor people, always oppressed by the mighty rulers of the States, the denial of any kind of right, whether civil or political to them, inspired in him a strong feeling against the feudatory rule still in existence in Orissan Native States. His poetic mind revolted against it and that is how his famous poem 'The Boatman Boy' came to light. It was the dark days of 1938. Dhenkanal, a small native State in Orissa was suffering from the pangs of oppression by the Ruler. The subjects could not take things lying down any longer when the height of oppression was reached. There was a revolution and while suppressing it, the police force of the king mercilessly killed Baji Raut—a tiny boy hardly twelve years of age. The poet, who was then a student, had to perform the funeral rites of the boy, who sacrificed his life for the liberation of

the people. Sri Raut Roy's spontaneous outflow found expression in the lines of that long and famous poem "The Boatman Boy," which will remain ever green in the memory of the people. In that poem he has cursed the forces of reaction, which have deteriorated the standard of humanity to a great extent. He has called upon the poets of the modern era not to indulge in the labyrinth of dreams and fancies. It does not behove the modern poet to turn his back towards the stark and grimacing realities of life. A poet should faithfully represent what he sees around him. He has also condemned the Escapists, who run away from this world selfishly searching for pleasure elsewhere in their dreams. As a man of flesh and blood, he cannot overlook the way people are being butchered everyday by the oppressors and parasites of the society, the way the anachronistic medieval relationship between the rulers and the ruled is still persisting in this world. In a nutshell, it contains the strongest and the most vehement condemnation of the present class-ridden world and its systems.

This bold step taken by Sri Raut Roy had its effect on young minds.

His first poem after World War II—named, 'Jyamiti' or 'Geometry' was, published in 'Shankha,' a celebrated Oriya journal edited by Dr. Mansingh. It was completely different from his previous poems and marks another landmark in his career. Like the Imagists of the twenties in England, he rejected the conventional verse form and repudiated flabby writings. He could not be subjected to the age-old rhymes and metres. He also did not favour the

rhyming of the penultimates in these poems. He rightly says in the preface to his collection of poems 'Pandulipi,' "If we have to perform acrobatics in order that laws of rhyming may be obeyed, the life-force of poetry will definitely be choked up." It is very true in the modern age when the poems are written to be read, not sung.

Not only did he free himself from the rhyming, but also he changed the theme of his poems. His recent poems are not lyrical in nature. Lyric is born of the outflow of the emotions of the poet. But the civilisation which fostered the growth of lyrics has died out. In the present level of social relationships, the poet can hardly afford to indulge in his personal emotions. The society which cemented the relationship between man and man has fallen to the ground like a house of cards. The glaring injustice, the lack of an ideal to adhere to, and the fissiparous tendencies have sapped the vitality out of the present society. Now it is the greatest need for the poet to rise equal to the occasion and to create an inspiring literature for his time. It seems to him as it were, that he alone can save the society from decay. Hence the modern poems are either didactical or sarcastical in nature. The modern men are really, in the words of T. S. Eliot, 'hollow men, stuffed men, leaning together, out head-piece filled with straw.' We require some ideal, some binding force, which can keep us together. It is the utmost duty of the poet of the modern time to provide the humanity with what it needs. He cannot afford to indulge in emotions, that will carry him away from humanity and its sorrows

and grievances. As Louis MacNeice has said, "My own prejudice is in favour of the poets, whose worlds are not too esoteric. I would have a poet able-bodied, fond of talking, a reader of newspapers, capable of pity and laughter, informed in Economics, appreciative of women, involved in personal relationships, actively interested in politics, susceptible to physical impressions." He is not a mere bundle of emotions, so that he may be swept away by the prevailing sentiments.

The girl of Sri Raut Ray's imagination depicted in a recent poem of his is not the same angel as Keats describes in *St. Agnes Eve*. He does not die for her love; - love is a matter-of-fact thing just like any other human feeling. 'Pratima Nayak' (that is her name) is not exceptionally good-looking nor exceptionally virtuous. Her face does not in the least resemble the full-moon—neither in shape nor in lustre. On the other hand, her small thin face is dotted with numerous red pimples, showing her way of life, and struggle with her own mind. Her eyes are hungry, and her lips are pale. There is a small leather bag in her hand and a huge khaki bush coat on her thin body. She is a supervisor of Supplies Department. Signs of struggle with life and the circumstances are writ large on her face. Her smile is a 'khaki smile' clad with the darkness of the night.

• In his poem "Mukti" or Freedom, he describes how man entering into the blind alley of life searches in vain for the vast meadow and green fields. This life is so much circumscribed in its scope that the man invariably is denied freedom, however much he craves

for it. Those who have tried for freedom and liberty have lost their way in the silent desert of adverse circumstances of life. So long as we are here, liberty is a misnomer.

In his "Matia Burujara Jahna" or 'the Moon in Matia Buruj' (Matia Buruj being a slum of Jute and Cotton Mill workers in Calcutta), he has condemned the social and economic pattern which has brought about the deterioration of man to the level of brutes. In addition to those concomitant drawbacks of the present system, there is the prevalence of so many "isms" and that has led to unnecessary bickerings among the people of different religions and faiths. This has led to devastating wars, the communal disturbances and their repercussions on the society. All these have weakened the backbone of our social set-up and at any time it may collapse.

Konarak, the great seat of Oriya architecture, has not impressed him so much. He is incapable of reading the poetry that is written on the stone carvings, which have so much appeal to the poets upto now. He considers it just a heap of skeletons of the people who have given their lives for the construction of such a huge structure, and who have been forgotten by the present generation. Nobody has ever considered how many poor workmen have laboured day in and day out to erect this temple. The King who had nothing to do with it gets all the credit for it. The money that was spent for it came from the poor peasants in way of taxation but what *quid pro quo* did they get by the construction of such a huge laviathan ? Only the whims of one man found expression and dominated over the wish

of the millions of inhabitants of the country. The art that is found on the stones also does not represent the true condition of the society of that day. It portrays the aristocratic way of living with the nude figures of dancing girls. Nowhere does the art depict the beauty of nature or the golden paddy fields which the poor peasant toil hard to grow in the fertile lands. In fact, the famous Black Pagoda is simply a symbol of oppression by the king of the day. It has got a very sad story to tell, if one has the eye to penetrate through its superficial beauty.

Sri Raut Roy has also written some humorous poems contained in "Hasant." He has depicted in a humorous but faithful manner how the celebration of death anniversaries of great men is turned to be farcical in nature. People have forgotten the ideals preached by those great men. Vested interests mainly use it as a forum of advertisement of cheap emotions and for playing upon the imagination of the masses. He also depicts humorously in one of his poems how the so-called fighters for independence are usurping the poor villagers after the achievement of independence, in the name of their past sacrifice and patriotism. Those poems are very true in their portrayal and the language is simply enchanting.

But the true test of a good poem as much as a modern one, does not consist in what imageries have been given or what novelty has been introduced. As T. S. Eliot has rightly observed in his introduction to the Selected Poems of Ezra Pound, "It is almost too platitudinous to say that one is not modern by not writing about chimney-pots or archaic by writing about oriflammes. It is true that most people who

write of oriflammes are merely collecting old coins as most people who write about chimney-pots forge new ones. It is merely a subjective difference of method. The mole digs, the eagle flies ; but their end is the same, to exist."

This is the true approach towards the critical appreciation of any poem of any age. The greatness of a poem lies in the amount of appeal it is capable of making to the minds of its readers. Sri Raut Roy's poems have been a great success in this direction. But still there is much to hope from him, young as he is in body as well as in mind.

A POET OF THE PEOPLE

Nolini Devi

At 27, Sochi Raut Roy has become the voice of Orissa's voiceless millions.

THE readers of the "Bombay Chronicle" are already acquainted with the poems of Sjt. Sochi Raut Roy, the leading progressive poet of Utkal. His writings mark a distinct orientation in the tendencies of modern poetry and win him the much-coveted title of "The People's Poet of Orissa" which he values more even than a Nobel prize. Sjt. Raut Roy is the widely acclaimed poet of the masses in whom, to quote his own language, "hunger burns like a bloody heat" and whose muscles are crinkled due to insufficient food. His poems have sent waves of electricity as it were, into the dead bones of the millions of Kisans, labourers and students of this country and have been responsible for the advancement and dawning of a new collective aspiration and solidarity among the starving masses of Orissa. Keenly sensitive to the objective conditions and historical developments of the time, he weaves his many-coloured garlands of fine progressive poetry which though rich in concrete imagery and rare rhythmic beauty are singularly free from the morbid sentimentality and sickly individualism that characterises the modern poems.

Wedded to Poetry

Born about the year 1915 in a well-to-do upper middle-class family of Orissa, Raut Roy completed

the twenty-sixth summer of his life last May.* From his early boyhood he showed signs of imaginative sensitiveness. The boy would more than often snatch away a few hours from his pastimes and would employ them in a fit of sudden absent-mindedness in thinking about his yet unknown mistress, "The Muse" of whom he was destined to become a jealous devotee in his later life. Like Cowley he was betrothed to poetry even from the days of his early boyhood and like the former he chose to marry his ill-chosen mistress "who brought him neither comfort nor a rich dowry" in after life.

His parents christened him with the name Sochi, but his friends who were highly displeased with him for his unnatural reserve, restraint and reflective lethargy soon discovered an appropriate nickname in the much-abused word "Budha" or "the little old man" by which name he became more familiarly known in his little village and the neighbouring town in the district of Puri.

Warlike Ancestors

Sjt. Raut Roy came of an ancient Kshatriya family of Orissa—a family which had a long tradition of heroic achievements. The Kshatriyas of Orissa were the prototypes of the Rajputs of northern India who were born and brought up with the ideals of defending their country from the invasion of the enemy hordes. The forefathers of Sjt. Raut Roy (the surname means the commander of 10,000 cavalry force) played a heroic role in the Paik-

*The article was published in "Bombay Chronicle" dated March 8, 1942.

revolution of Khurda, the then capital of Utkal. The Paiks or Khandayats (The word *Khandayat* literally meant "the controller of the sword" which amply signified the domineering characteristics of this war-like race) of Utkal organised a successful revolt against the authorities of the East India Company for its intensive exploiting policy. They had a sweeping march over the city of Katak, defeated the British force, razed the prison to the ground and got their imprisoned Gajapati King released and reinstalled on the throne. But soon after a mightier British reinforcement from the South compelled them to surrender and the revolution, collapsed. The ancestors of Sjt. Raut Roy were the military 'Gurus' of the Gajapati kings of Utkal and were held in high respect by them as teachers of war-craft. Sjt. Raut Roy inherited in his blood the warlike spirit of his heroic grandfathers and waged an uncompromising warfare against the sham, inequity and class-predominance that dwarfed and deformed the healthy growth of human society.

Escapist Poems

Sri Raut Roy displayed rare lyrical promise in his early compositions. He began writing verse even as soon as he learnt to read and write. He incurred the displeasure of his parents who looked upon his poems with suspicion and kept constant watch upon his movements in order to prevent him from wasting his valuable study-hours in what they considered extremely idle occupations.

But the boy managed to steal some hours from his well-guarded daily life and piled manuscripts

after manuscripts of, as he says now, "rubbish and damned escapist poems."

He began his poetic career as a romantic writer with a terrific passion for shaping his designs according to his own pattern. He had an extremely sensitive nerve and a wild response to all that was supremely beautiful around him. At the age of 16 he published his first book of poems under the caption "Patheya". The book was full of promise, enthusiasm and lyrical spontaneity. This book although influenced by Tagorian mysticism, drew the attention of the reading public towards this tender boy, and the more aged and veteran writers of the day began to whisper about him "Here is a genius"! The next year saw another book of his, a drama this time, published. He became very popular by this time. Besides, he used to contribute regularly poems, essays, short-stories and small playlets, to various magazines of Orissa, such as "Sisir," "Nabeen," "Yugo-Vina," "Sahakar," "Palli-Mangal" and "Utkal Sahitya." The Sobuj Sahitya Samiti, a leading publishing house of Orissa, organised among others by Sjt. Annada Shankar Roy, at present a reputed novelist of Bengal, Kalindi Panigrahi, and Baikuntha Patnaik, published one of his playlets "Purnima" by name. He made his mark as a romantic poet with a keen sensitiveness to the native loveliness of life.

1930

But the tragedies of human life with its deep sores and wounds were waiting for him to give them expression. The historic year of 1930 came !

This year marked a new orientation in his whole outlook. It was a year of thrilling events and sensational situations. The Satyagraha campaign started by Gandhiji sent sparks of inspiration into the hearts of the people. The youths of India who were sleeping so long like colossal giants were stirred to enthusiasm and Orissa was not an exception.

Raut Roy, a pretty young school boy of 15, responded promptly to the call of the nation. He joined the strikes, hoisted national flag on his school at dead of night and got himself rusticated. The traditional revolutionary spirit of his ancestors which he inherited in his blood was lying so long unconscious in him. The year 1930 supplied an easy outlet to these "sleeping furies." His writings began to flow in another channel.

He used to write fiery poems vibrating with national aspiration challenging the forces of exploitation and tyranny.

His early poems were mainly published in the literary weekly "Nabeen" and won general admiration. Raut Roy had to take a migration certificate and join the Calcutta University in the year 1934. He passed the Matriculation examination from a school in Calcutta in the first division and joined the City College, Calcutta, in the year 1935. He wrote and published a novel, "Chitragriha," which recorded a bold challenge and "placid effrontery" against all sorts of romanticism and reformist tendencies that made so far our literature supine and bloodless. He stood for a literature that was at once virile and full-blooded and moved with the life-forces of the time

spontaneously. "Chitragriba" was a ruthless criticism of the silly emotionalism and lawless individualism that stunted the progress of a healthy literary outlook. It stands unique in the whole range of Oriya literature for its biting criticism, scientific approach and humane interpretation of the process of life. The same year he published another essay exposing the inherent fallacies of the institutions of marriage and religion as they were. His boldness made him at once popular with the huge mass of progressive elements in the country as well as unpopular with the old and diehard forces in the cultural field of Orissa.

From Prison to Examination Hall

Before he could complete his Intermediate course he was suddenly arrested by the Calcutta police one night in connection with an alleged conspiracy case. But he was soon found "innocent" and was subsequently released on bail just on the morning of his University examination. He rushed to the examination hall direct from the prison room in a taxi and managed to get through the I.A. Examination. Then he returned to Orissa and graduated from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack in the year 1939.

Raut Roy was a great force in the students movement in Orissa. His pen could wield a powerful influence on the thousands of students. During the Students Satyagraha nearly 200 students courted arrest and offered Satyagraha at the Secretariat gates including twelve girl students. The main source of their inspiration was the fire-tinged writings of "The Chatra"—a journal edited and written by Sjt.

Raut Roy. Raut Roy was fined Rs. 250|- in this connection.

He too played a conspicuous part in the States People's movement of Orissa. His poems sent waves of fire into the dead hearts of the States people who organised themselves to assert their legitimate civil rights. His poems were sung even by the illiterate cow-boys of the remotest States of Orissa. Several brave martyrs even faced the bullets while singing his songs.

His "Rakta Sikha" (Red Flames) a book of poems which was practically banned by the Government was the most widely read and sung book in Orissa. The Kisans after their heavy day's routine would assemble under their little 'Bhagvat ghars' (village club) and recite in chorus the songs contained in the book. Their sweating eyes would be widened in a mightier vision and their hearts would be pulsing with newer aspirations while uttering every word of it.

"Avijan" is another characteristic book of Sjt. Raut Roy. It is held in high esteem by the modern generation. It is a landmark of new progressive ideas in the domain of Oriya literature. It embodies all the visions and aspirations of the people of the new age—the age of freedom and democratic consciousness.

"Baji Raut" and "Palli-Sree" are two of his most remarkable works. "Baji Raut", the boatman boy of 12 who preferred the bullets of the troops to lowering down the banner of the Praja Mandal of which he was a member, has been immortalised in the former. It breathes a dignified elegiac note

and bears the solemn stamp of poet's personality. To quote a contemporary Oriya Journal of criticism, "the book occupies an important place in the national life of Orissa, as important as a place occupied by the Bhagavad Gita." Sjt. Harindranath Chattopadhyay has translated the whole book into English. The opening passage of the book runs :

"This is no funeral-flame, comrade !

No funeral-flame, but—freedom's leaping
flame.

To cleave the country's darks of death and
shame :

A sacrificial mystery

Of death turned life . . . Flame beyond price !

Lo, you have offered unto history.

The century's supremest bud of breath.

Extremest symbol of high sacrifice.

Our boatman boy, proud conquerer of
death ! !

Time hath discovered in that little
form.

The authentic leader of the starving
folk.

Fire-laurelled boatman of the country
who

Will steer it like a boat and bring
it through !"

His "Palli-Sree" is a new experiment in building up the structures of a mass literature. In this book he has depicted the life of the people with its native beauty and simplicity. The book marks the

growth of a new school of writing in Orissa which recognises the potential dignity of "the average humanity" and interprets the little tragedies and comedies of people's life from a socio-historic viewpoint. The language is as close as possible to the speaking language of the people and the pictures are quite homely and familiar. Lyrical perfection, dainty polish and exquisitely simple style combined with a haunting rhythm and rich aesthetic value endears the book to everybody. A highly sophisticated intellectual as well as an illiterate peasant of the village will find equal pleasure in going through the homely lines of this unique book. The book possesses wide and lavish interest, supreme fertility, objective lucidity and profound music.

Raut Roy is to-day the most pleasant personality in the public life of Orissa. His versatile genius, pleasant manners and smart and genial response to the objective conditions of life charge his works with vaster meanings and invest them with wider appeals and influence. Far from the dirty intricacies of the political life of Orissa, he exercises a silent and abiding influence on the formation of a new outlook among the members of the new and coming generations.

Some of his works have already been rendered into English by Sjt. Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the well-known poet and playwright of India.

The English and Hindi versions of Raut Roy's works, when published, will acquaint India with a most modern and entertaining poet of India who, neglected and unrecognised now, blooms like a wild

flower in vast obscurity. Time will discover in this tender poet of 27 an authentic artist of the people who lives for the people, writes for the people and cherishes a secret ambition to die for the people.*

*Published first in the "Bombay Chronicle" Bombay, March 8, 1942. A Gujaratee version of the essay was published in the Gujaratee 'Lok-Yuddha' in 1943.

PART II

A STUDY IN RAUT ROY'S POEMS

Prof. Viswanadha Satyanarayana, M.A.

Not so easy it is to resist the desire to write about a brother poet from a sister province, especially in these days in the wake of the new dawn of Independence when the cultural unity of India is found all the more indivisible and imperative, and to review the vistas of luxuriant flora, particularly when the patch of ground before one splashes the brilliant rays of the morning sun. Sri Sochi Raut Roy's poems are always an isle of vignettes where soul gets an 'apocalyptic' vision revealing 'Ecce Homo' and melts into a 'requiem.' The dual nature of his dirge is made plain by the symbol 'Ecce Homo' which stands at once for mysticism and suffering. Sorrow and suffering though not devoid of each other, are two different things in their spiritual content. From the beginning of time sorrow has been the main theme of the Muse of poetry, but now in a world riddled by many an antagonism, suffering seems to have taken its place. Poets singing of the suffering of the people are generally hailed as 'people's poet'.

Sri Raut Roy has sung passionately of the sorrows and suffering of the people and he is predominantly known throughout India as the 'People's Poet of Orissa.' Still 39, Sri Roy has come to be regarded as the 'voice of the voiceless millions' and his reputation in contemporary India as a national poet and as a singer of the hopes and fears and joys and suffering of the mighty but mute millions bears

comparison in many respects with that of the poet Kazi Nazrul Islam of Bengal and the poet Bharati of Tamilnad. Sri Raut Roy had faced the ruthless attacks of British Raj several times and incarceration, fines, and proscription of books had been meted out to him bounteously, but nothing had retarded the steps of this young bard from being the bugler of his country's struggles.

His 'Boatman Boy' was born directly of the people's baptism of fire when they launched a revolt against the feudal rule of the Native States of Orissa in 1938. It narrates the story of a brave ferry boy who bared his breast to the bullets of the feudal troops without the least tinge of fear. When the agents of bureaucracy threatened him with death he did not betray the cause of Revolution. This is the main theme of the poem. It is aptly divided into five spans, the name of the first chapter being 'Red Flower'.

'Nay Boatman you shall not renounce the oar
Until the boat has touched the shore...'

These lines are full of suggestion and carry away the reader to a realm of ecstasy. It is an immortal song. 'Sun shudders to read it, the storm turns pale reading it and the black night blooms to laughter'. The imageries contained herein reveal the temperament of the poet that responds readily to the delicate overtones of melancholy. The poet has a brilliant expression :

'Poet of future freedom
Your dying was a poem.'

This is something grand, because the dying of the martyr inspires the world as much as a real poem does.

The poem was translated into English in 1942 by Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyay and published in the same year it created quite a stir in literary India and consolidated the position of Sri Raut Roy in India as a true national poet.

Sri Raut Roy,—had he only been a poet of revolution with the fervour and ideology of seeing the existing order topsy-turvy, would not have received the encomiums from different kinds of admirers as he does. But he is essentially a poet of the soul. He is a poet-philosopher and therein lies the allurements of his songs. His poems resonate the 'Eternal music of the spheres.'

"O dead ! why are you silent ?

Ah nay, your very death is loud with life

With future liberated life,

With life a flaming carnival of freedom."

(The Boatman Boy)

In these lines though the last line smacks of revolution, the preceding lines can not be said to mean only revolution. They mean eternal life—the journey onward, which is the main strain of the soul of India.

"Through his dying earth has changed
from so much ugliness to so much beauty."

Oh ! what a great truth it is that man is consecrated in his death by the nobleness of his acts ! Sri

Roy's soul is full of poetry. Sometimes melodious expression is mistaken for poetry. The diction is only the garment of the great thought-process which gives individuality to a poet. Roy's poetry is full of such flashes which reveal his close observation of Man and Nature. Very often he is one with the daw and the 'soaring bird', singing slender-throated :

"O he is like a slender-throated bird
Which soars and sings,
While around its flight
All heaven is struck and stirred
To a wide sense of wings
Fire-tinged, unfettered, high :
O he is a bird of freedom now
Who rests no more upon the crooked bough
Of wasteful agony, but sweeps the sky !"

The lines remind us of Shelley's skylark. The soul of Roy has something akin to Shelley's and that precisely ensures his place among the lyricists. The poem embodies some epic qualities and above all, that sweep of passion that makes it vibrant with life.

But now the whole poem would have been the dry dirge of a revolutionary, but Sri Roy is far above that. And the part of this poem entitled 'To the Mother' is not intended to appeal to the revolutionary fervour, but to the human sentiment because the two strains are two different streams. One appeal contains in *Veera Rasa*, while the other is in *Karuna Rasa*.

"Your shrunken woman's body
Your trembling aged body

Your brave though broken body
Grown neighbour unto heat and dust and toil :
While in your deepest heart the young voice whispers
'Oh Mother ! Oh Mother' !"

It touches the deepest human sympathies. It is as if the poet has crept into the mother's bosom and heard the whispers of her child therein. This is poetry at its highest. And as for the poetical similes and metaphors, the following lines would be the best example :

"How when the blue-black clouds of July covered
The naked spaces
Their inky shadow wooed and won the river
And how his little boat would also then
Woo and win the bosom of the river."

A part of the poem is addressed to the Wayfarer. This part is something like an elegy though maintaining at the same time its distinct dynamism.

"Is it not marvellous how this little dead
Has cast a giant shadow everywhere
Now he has left us all
And will not answer though we call and call."

(The Boatman Boy)

This is real sorrow. There is nothing of the 'revolutionary' strain in it, because the revolutionary's aim is to rouse people in the name of injustice done to them and not to reflect the sorrow of the human heart. In these lines we note a sublime disinterestedness that behoves of a truly great poet.

Considering Sri Roy's other poems, especially those included in the new collected edition of his poems published recently by the Modern Review Office, Calcutta—9, under the title of "The BOATMAN BOY AND FORTY POEMS", 'The Boatman Boy' is perhaps negligible and decidedly enough Sri Roy's claim to being a poet does not rest on this poem only. The poem may be responsible for his popularity, but his claim to greatness as a poet lies elsewhere. Poems contained in this collection, particularly the poems grouped under the section 'Vignettes' are his best—at least as far as this collection is concerned. He is not simply a poet. He emerges as an ardent philosopher—a devout seeker of Truth—one who has pondered over the birth, sustaining and the truth of human life. It will be hyperbole if it is said that these ideas have not been expressed better elsewhere. They sound like a page from Upanishads :

"Pneumas yoked in twos
Plough through slumbering hours
As couples lie locked in sleep
Resigning to a mooning minute."

(*Vignettes*)

The thought, the expression and the execution have all so finely been blended here that the whole piece is seen in a lustrous form.

"Out of the womb of earth
A tree is born
A murmuring lone forest soul"

The 'Vignettes' are to be studied and enjoyed by the reader. They are not to be explained or eulogised. Herein lies the poet of India though read in English.

The English language used as cloak of Indian poetry sometimes lends its colour, sometimes disfigures things and sometimes creates new values. A completely native expression does not lend itself to translation and the translator seeks a new expression that appears to be natural to the language he translates a work into. This difficulty is, however, not felt much in the matter of translation between different European languages as they have a common parentage of religion, ideology, and philosophy and very often, derivation. But when it comes to translating a literary piece in an Indian language into English, a very great poet with a native genius may at times suffer whereas the works of a comparatively lesser poet may assume flavour. Some portions often appear as landmark in a translated poem though on the very face of them they are found to be not faithful to the original on account of the imageries employed therein being foreign to the native tongue, and the expression an imposition. If the translator happens to be an adept at the language into which he translates a work, his idiom, his vocabulary and his rich expressions go a long way to embellish the original. Sometimes even the vice versa may take place. Here in this collection that such anomaly does not exist is evidenced by the exquisitely beautiful, original native thought which could never have been incorporated by a translator. Besides, the poet says in the 'Acknowledgements' of the book that most of the poems in this section (eg. *Apocalypse*) were originally

written by him in English though final verse-form was given by the translator.

The "Cloud-Symphony" is full of the colour and imagery of Kalidas's Meghdoot, and at the same time it is a very original composition having a wealth of new word-pictures, subtle symbolism and imageries. It stands as an eloquent testimony to the beauty of Sri Roy's original native expression. Only a man drunk deep at the fountain of native literature can write such a poem. This single piece can alone prove abundantly the integrity and thoroughness of Roy as a truly Indian poet :

"Atop the roof of the skies
the cloud maidens dry their hair."

Dr. Kalidas Nag and Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyay in their introductory essays have assessed the real poetic value of Sri Roy's works in the two languages—Bengali and Oriya. He is undoubtedly one of the great poets in his own mother-tongue and the translation of his poems is really welcome to the English reader as well as to the Indian readers of other provinces.

In the veins of Sri Roy runs the celestial music of the sphere—a symphony of sounds heard in the mundane and heavenly planes. His soul is one with the Cosmos and the philosophy of his poetry rises to the height of singing :—

"The end of music is music"

This does not mean Art for Art's sake. This means something else. Read it in its context, it will

reveal that the word 'music' here stands for the beauty of the soul—the soul that pervades the Universe. The poet singing in his orb gets merged in the Cosmos :

"The whole history of everything
Is the essence of a soul
Getting lost into another's."

Here instead of the word 'another's' if the word 'eternal' would have been used, his philosophy would have been of a Vedantist. But now his philosophy is that of a poet. It is a humanitarian philosophy taking cognizance of the eternity of soul. He hears 'voices in the dark', 'the worm of voices' taking 'foggy shapes', the craggy walls speaking, and the 'fading footsteps of tombstoned days.' He hears music in the flight of a swan and in a gurgling brook. He hears muted notes in a soul freed from its enclosures and closely follows up the trail. The moonlight and midnight shade and the whispering notes of the leaves are to him a ballet. What a colourful soul this poet has which transmigrates into beautiful sounds and beautiful sceneries and landscapes ! He becomes one with everything that is beautiful and it is a wonder that this poet should speak of revolution. A poet with such approach has had nothing to complain—far less revolt—against the disorders that are seen in the mundane world. Things come and go. All these things are nothing but the vicissitudes of life and cruel deeds of ambitious men. But the poet whose soul is in tune with the music of the spheres is not naturally concerned with the petty transient

occurrences of the objective world. These are to him merely passing shadows.

But Roy's realism born of his innate dynamics is socially conscious and is imbued with values of social contents. So we cannot expect complete escapism from a poet of Roy's character. A Yogi is a Yogi. But he has got a body to feed and clothe. A poet of cosmic vision should also come down to the terra firma as he cannot lose consciousness of his environs altogether. Sri Roy is both a pure poet and a poet of the people, both of which though incompatible with each other, have found a happy blending in the poems of Roy. He combines highest imagination with a sense of realism and reality. The beauty of his soul can be summed up in the following words : He identifies himself with revolutionary poets when he sings of mundane things. He even goes to the extent of calling his other half 'escapism'. It is nothing but an index of poet's transparent sincerity—marked with an authentic stamp of genuineness. Sincerity may not be taken to mean a phase of thought prevailing throughout one's life-time. But he did and does feel them all alike at different times and under different circumstances, and what he feels he sings with utmost sincerity. This interpretation explains the apparent dualism that characterises Sri Roy's works as a poet.

The poems called *Apocalypse*, *Ecce Homo*, and *Requiem* though their titles smack of Christianity, have nothing in common with the Christian theology. They are words simply borrowed to suit the strain.

"I wait for the diapasonal word
 The Signature—
 I am He and Everything
 The origination and the end
 The seed, the fruition eternal
 Alpha and Omega'."

(*Apocalypse*)

These lines embody the experience and realisation of India through ages. Sri Roy is a fond child of ancient ages and the grand traditions of our ancient culture. This is the point where he endears himself to all real poets of our land.

In this collection there are many other poems—songs written on different subjects, and at different times. The two titles *The Dying Who Never Die* and *When Hunger Burns* are songs written on the toiling population. They are simple, courageous and dynamic. His *Sahajahan* is a poem with a difference interpreting the love of the Emperor for Mamtaj more as an Imperial show than anything conventionally taken for granted.

The frustrations of the age, the 'Cinderella of faith abandoned' fill his heart with anguish and finds his ego 'tattered and riven in seven winds like confetti from a town of dreams,' and he seeks fulfilment in a 'meridian moment that negates him' ; 'his cinder shadow burnt out by the verbes of fury' of the sun. The poem *Nocturne* emerges as a harbinger of a later state of fructification of his soul which bloomed into *Vignettes* and *Dhvani Lok*.

Sometimes his 'realism' is the realism of the imagists. In 'Protima Nayak' the 'Khaki inane

smiles' of his heroine reveal a lining of melancholy to the pattern of his poetic thought. The symbols represent disintegration and lost hopes. A symbol in poetry must be an acknowledged one on all hands, conveying a universal meaning. Now-a-days modern poets create new symbols. If the poet can successfully imprint on the minds of the readers, the import of the symbol it is well and good. It can be safely said that Roy is infinitely successful in this matter as well. Sometimes his pictures are in the strain of a second-rate novelist, *e.g.*

'A soldier sits in the empty eating house
And sips a lukewarm tea
Bleared eyes
Peeping over the rim of a yellow cup
Gazing at his own visage
In the straw-coloured brew.'

(*To Chandravati*)

This is no doubt picturesque, but it can never be said good poetry except for its Freudian impact, importing a reflex or if we may say so, the Narcissism complex. At moments Roy's realism assumes real grandeur, and a classic dignity, *e.g.*

"Bullying oracles of Delphic dailies
monitor our thoughts
with brazen words that sleep with the winds
Our winged days are meaningless
Mummied butterflies on plastic flowers
In the show-windows of civilization..."

(*Atlas*)

Sri Roy's poems bear the unmistakable mark of his 'internationalism.' We come across in his poems symbols and word-pictures that represent strange landscapes, unknown horizons, and 'unmapped savannas' belonging to far-off lands ranging from the Penguin islands to the gum woods of Australian shores loud with 'corroborees'. All these assume significance when we remember that the poet had travelled widely all over the world and he visited in 1952 Australia, New Zealand, and many a South-east Asian country like Siam, Ceylon, Indonesia on a Government of India deputation. He was accorded rousing receptions by the leading artists and litterateurs as well as the cultural organizations of the countries he visited.

The different cultural streams of India seem to have been commingled in the life and works of Sri Roy. Like the triple-streamed *Triveni* the cultures of sculpturesque Orissa as well as of Bengal and Andhra Desh find equal echo in his life and works. There are numerous images and allusions in his poems that reverberate the local colour and natural sceneries of Orissa, Bengal, Andhra and even of U. P.

His poem *On Flows The Krishna*, and *Geometric* have Andhra backgrounds. This may apparently seem strange on the part of a poet who is born in Orissa and bred over 12 years in Bengal. But a few know the fact that Roy's genius is interwoven with the culture of Andhra Desa since he has married into a renowned Zamindar family of Teluguland and as such the river Krishna naturally wakes in him thoughts of pleasure and happiness which are com-

mon link between him and the writer of this article a Telugu man born on the banks of the Krishna.

Sri Roy has been selected by the Harvard University to participate in their International Seminar this year. He is one of the twenty Asians who have been honoured with the invitation to take part in the deliberations of the Seminar. We do hope that he will carry the message of renascent India to America and Europe and more than justify his great assignment as a non-official cultural ambassador of our country.*

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POEMS OF REVOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

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I FEEL honoured that I have been invited to contribute to this symposium. Sri Sochi Raut Roy is undoubtedly a poet of the people, dedicated to the task of using his pen to 'sign the charter of Man for Men'. As a poet he played a great role when India was still under foreign domination and he has a great role to play now that we are a free nation.

Not knowing Oriya, I am not of course quite qualified to attempt an estimate of Sri Sochi Raut Roy's poetry. Translation, even when it is reasonably satisfactory, is but a pale reflection, if not indeed a perversion, of the original. Yet one is sometimes obliged to infer from the mere portrait the human being of whom it is no more than a mimicry ; and occasionally one almost feels that the portrait actually tingles with life. Rarely is a poet lucky in his translator ; and rarely is a poet enough of a bilinguist to be his own translator. But Sri Sochi Roy has been exceedingly fortunate in his two translators, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and B. Sinha, especially the former who is a poet in his own right and can wield the English language like a master. To the non-Oriya reader, therefore, the publication of Sri Sochi Roy's collected poems entitled *The Boatman Boy & Forty Poems* is most welcome, for it facilitates an exploration of the mind and heart of this people's poet, undoubtedly among those authentic poets of our time who have given memor-

able articulation to the body-aches, heart-beats and soul-leaps of nascent India. From matter to spirit is one gamut, and Sri Sochi Roy's is an all-inclusive muse. His is an integral vision, and it is his particular merit as a poet that beyond all strife and ugliness and hard dealing he sees the finality of peace and beauty and goodness.

Sri Sochi Roy is well under forty, and he has been writing poetry for nearly 20 years. But he leapt to sudden fame in 1939 when he immortalized in song the boy martyr, Baji Raut, who on the night of October 10, 1938, while guarding a vantage point, refused to surrender his boat to the threatening troops, and thereby courted instant death. The background was the revolution organized by the Praja Mandal against the feudal despotism of a native State. Today the atmosphere is cleared of the marsh vapours that once polluted our fair land. India is free, integration is an accomplished fact, and the common people have their destiny in their own hands. But the martyrdom of heroes like Baji Raut must for ever light up men's hearts with hope and faith in the evolving destiny of the people of India. 'The Boatman Boy' is conceived in five spans, and comprehends the full circuit of ardour, agony, martyrdom, despair, and eventual resurrection. The concluding stanza is characteristic of all genuine poetry :

"Revolution's Phoenix—you shall ever come
And make a stalwart stand, mid your country's storm;
Rip up the old order like a tornado ;
And forge in the new in a wondrous form."

Baji is verily 'Revolution's Phoenix': a beacon, a burning brazier.

Sri Sochi Roy's poems offer abundant evidence of his rich sensibility and versatility. He sings of man, nature, and what lies beyond them; of river, rains and storms; of places, situations and the coils of adverse circumstance; of the tears in things, of the ardour of adventure, of the joy of living. He can be gay, he can be serious; and he can write with elemental force of hunger and pain—

"Hunger burns like a bloody heat....."

"Well-fed master! we are starving! give us bread!
In your hands you hold our life—the life of the
living dead!....."

He can write of man's cruelty to man, and of nature's unpredictable violences... 'Konarak' and its decadent art rouses his anger:

"Oblation of a thousand souls,
Scores of hamlets wiped away,
Cheap price for a carnal feast.
An etching in blood
Of Vishu Maharnas,
To entice the ennuye eyes;
A voluptuous orgy
In the friezes of stones..."

But Sri Sochi Roy also gives praise where praise is due—to the 'master builders', the 'forgotten twelve hundred', the 'nameless gods'.

Some of Sri Sochi Roy's latest poems—'Apocalypse', 'Dhvani Lok' and 'Ode to Man', for example—show a maturity of thought and feeling, and it is

clear he is still growing in stature as a poet. The proper study of mankind is Man, and our poet is ceaselessly preoccupied with the fate of Homo Sapiens. Man is set in the background of nature, and man ever seeks self-transcendence ; and to understand the human problem there is need to explore the filiations between Man and Nature, and the Power or Force that lies behind them both. It is still the burden of the poet to start with Time and end with Eternity, and to link up past, present and future in a purposive sequence.

“Where’s man ?

Of him I sing,

I dream :

I shall not cease,

my Cassandra-voice I’ll raise,

the seer’s gaze shall be mine,

The urge of the sylph imbued,

rich with the carvings of endless life.

I sing of Dawn....

Underneath the striped antimony sky

runs the middle way

underlining twilight’s trusteeship.

All hail !

Greetings of the Dawn !

I sing the epithalmium of darkness and light,

To man I inscribe my muse....”

Sri Sochi Roy is thus the poet, not of revolution alone, but also of reconciliation, a ‘dear and dogged’ man addressing his verses to fellow human beings.*

*The version of this article was published first as an unsigned review in *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi dated the 27th February, 1955.

POETRY OF MR. RAUT ROY

(*An Estimate and Appreciation*)

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ONE does not write and publish poetry these days, I think, if he can help it. It is only an irresistible urge for poetic expression that compels a man to rush in where worldly wisdom fears to tread. To me, therefore, the publication of a book of verse is itself a certain proof of the quality of its contents, because, if its author is not obsessed by the mere desire of seeing his writings in print, it is an indication of a confidence that a poet must possess in order to be a poet at all. Mr. Roy's *The Boatman Boy And Forty Poems* is a collection of poems born of true poetic inspiration, and they are presented to the public in a spirit of assurance.

Most of the poems in the volume are translations of his poems written originally in Oriya or Bengali. So a correct appraisal of these poems in their English garb may not be possible, for as an Italian proverb has it : translators are traitors. But fortunately the translator of *The Boatman Boy*, Mr. Harindranath Chattopadhyay, is actually a liberator—and I almost feel he has been able to add a new quality to the original—being a poet of international repute in the English medium. The last section of the book contains poems some of which were originally written in English by the author. These poems have given him a chance for direct utterance

and being a man of wide interests and travelling experience and keenly sensitive to the various problems of our age in a detached manner, it has only been wise for him to choose an international language, for he addresses himself to all communities of men, as all genuine poets do.

The Boatman Boy is apparently a patriotic song occasioned by the heroic self-sacrifice of a boy of twelve to a power that justified itself only by the strength of arms and oppression, but actually it is a poem of revolution against torture and tyranny—the victim being the symbol of a greater power that rises glorious from ashes—the power of martyrdom. This is why the poet has been able to raise the particularities of an event in time to the ‘mighty abstraction’ and timelessness of poetry, and this alone perhaps accounts for the absence of a regular narrative pattern. The poem, therefore, which is written almost as an elegy, is characterised by a sinewy vigour in its tone and rhythm. The poet here sings of the “hero-hearted thing”—a “new prophet-power” whose “bier bearing his body turned a shrine” and whose “dying was a poem which hath made death itself turn pale and die.” His death “hath blown a redness in the moon” and “tinged the evening sky and passed into the rose” and has also set him free to “soar and sing”

“While round its flight all heaven is struck
and stirred
To a wide sense of wings”

So the poet burning with fury and then swelling with hope cries at the end :

"Out of that self-same anguish will I raise
A giant pinnacle to pierce the moon !"

And believes :

".....Now he cometh nearer
Ever since death hath taken him away,
In life we were divided—Death has made him
dearer."

and :

He has become a fire in every body
Prophet of hope housed in each man's despair."

Here and there the beauty born of Shelleyan idealism has passed into the poems but in all such cases it has been assimilated in the texture. And it must be said to the great credit of the poet that what could have easily degenerated into a mere time server, has become moving poetry for all times.

Most of the poems that form the second and the third phases of the book are marked by vivid images, fine poetic sensibilities along with a consciousness of the conditions of our sophisticated society and anaemic charms of our civilization. Some of these are love poems which perpetuate in memorable words, passion's ecstasy and body's rapture and in some others the poet is nostalgic for the land of heart's desire, where life is lived in its very elements. So now he talks of "delight's deluge" and Shajahan's "Imperial grief" and then suddenly holds up before us unforgettable word-pictures in lines like :

"....gossamer strands of moonlight lie out-
stretched

Upon the wires of telegraphs below
Like pieces of severed strings of kites."

(Aeroplane)

Or :

"Lonely village walks
Among lavender rows.....
The distant sky
Washed in milk and purple,
Fades beyond Arcturus.....
A village Uloopi
Unrobes for evening bath."

(Evening in U.P.)

Or again :

"The odour of dank straw
And sodden earth,
The brick-red flame of a smoky lantern
Under the thatched roof
Of a pathetic village railway station.
Behind the clouds :
Between the trees,
The antics of an impish moon."

(Untimely Rains)

Or yet again :

"A warrior
Stands at the city gates,

Statue of a fighter,
Killed in the world upheaval.
Grey patches
Look like rotting wounds upon his limbs,
Edges have been chipped away,
A bad mauling by cruel years.
A valorous horseman in his saddle,
A bold mastiff at his heels,
Gone to an inglorious sleep at a small town-end.”
(*The Balance Sheet*)

When reading through poems one suddenly comes upon lines that almost hold one fascinated to the spot :

And a storm of unspoken words
In our wake....
(*A Crossing-Over*)

Or :

When we met again,
The cunning craft of your hair's toilet
Intrigued my eye.
(*Alaka Sanyal*)

So here we have a poet for whom 'the poetry of earth is never dead', whatever be the changes she puts on in course of her evolution. The message of beauty comes to him through all his senses and he does not allow any experience to pass unsung or unenshrined in poetry.

The poems of the last section written directly in

English try to give poetic voice to an experience for which language is perhaps not the fittest medium. Yet inspite of this limitation, the poet has been able to bring within the purview of his poetic vision the whole gamut of spiritual thought. Though occasionally punctuated by obstinate questionings, on the whole, they seem to be written in a spirit of reverent surrender and the longing in them is one for the source from which the whole universe emanates and into which it ultimately reaches its goal. As the poet puts it :

Threading the beads of births and deaths
Of untold lives.....

I return

The flaming arrow

Back in its quiver. (*Ecce Homo*)

These poems give their readers a feeling of vastness and through revealing images make the experience of the soul's winging in limitless sky, poetically real. They therefore conjure up a twilight of mystery where "in earth silences" the ego seeks "the halcyon peace" and where—

The songs of my deepest silence

Stir the mute dust

That bursts into the music of a swan.

(*Apocalypse*)

Where again :

The sun arches over the western brow

The soft feel of a sea-green night,

Midst mossy quiet of dark.

(*Requiem*)

In this cosmic vision the poet sees life as :

In this earth
And creation's dust
I'm scattered
Like verticals of life diffused.

(Ibid)

and the goal of life as :

To be adrift, to brave the boundless space
the negation of time,
To leave the death desexed and hairless here
And then enter the Zion-gates of life.

(Cloud-Burst)

Yet in moments of despair he asks the "God of unfolding" :

Will it be just an empty gourd
filled with the vacuity of our wisdom,
the hollow of our cipher souls ?
A mountain of scuttled dreams,
lighting the way to rollicking follies
in winding alleys that never end ?

(Atlas)

But his unshaken faith in the destiny of man
suggests the remedy to the malady of frustration :

Let each of us carry on his shoulders
As much of the world as he can
Like Atlas.

(Ibid)

With this new joy of hope when he turns to the
earth, he is a lover :

Under the guava-coloured moon
 I come to tryst
 I.....
 And my earth.

When there is—

“Overhead, behind the caravan clouds
 a slice of moon burst
 A shower of airy mist.”

(Night Sowing)

Therefore to him now :

In the ballet of moonlight shade
 the tree murmurs.....
 The tree whispers to itself
 in a low, sultry voice
 Words of undying hope.....
 The tree itself is the promise.

(Tree-Murmurs)

And so with lover's eyes he can see :

the cloud maidens dry their hair.
 Atop the roof of the skies

(Cloud-Symphony)

or

..gold-orange fish sport on airy wings
 tearing through watery ridges
 to kiss the lips of gasping waves.

Or even :—

The darkness grins
 a cold inane smile

Meaningless and erratic
 like the giggle of an ebony-coloured barbarian
 girl.

(*The Fisherman*)

It is not, therefore, natural for him to write an
 'Ode to Man' towards the end and sing :

All hail
 Greetings of the dawn
 I sing the epithalmium of darkness and light
 To man I inscribe my muse !

(*Ode to Man*)

It is indeed significant that he ends his book
 with a poem entitled *The Joy of Living*.

It is poetry's privilege to crystallize thoughts
 'that voluntary move harmonious numbers.' Mr.
 Roy's poetry gives its readers a taste of such crystal-
 lization. He has touched life at different levels
 and therefore there is variety and sweep and even
 occasional grandeur in his works. He is already
 a poet of considerable fame and I am sure in future
 years he will attain greater heights of glory.

A PROPHET OF A NEW WORLD

P. Sama Rao, B.A., B.L.

A virile frame neither too thick nor too thin and twitching all over to accomplish that which no modern poet has achieved ; a mystic look piercing into the heart of things, but a little clouded and sad, a tenderness of heart akin to woman's, catholic sweep of outlook that proposes to rope in everything on its own account with a tyrant's gusto ; and above all, that unqualified preference and deification of Man at the cost of other creation, are some of the salient traits of the genius of Sri Sochi Raut Roy, who is barely twenty-eight, the poet, the essayist, the storyteller, and the playwright both in Oriya and Bengali. His heart is now pit-a-pat like the dove's with an anxiety that he might not be able to see the Phoenix rise out of the ashes of decadent conventions, outworn superstitions, enervating political creeds, and all that which have not only enslaved Man but made a coward of him even in matters of assertion of his fundamental rights of existence. He is fired with the usual impatience and selflessness of martyrs. So far he has been the youngest Whitman preaching principles of camaraderie :

"I speak the password primeval,
I give the sign of democracy,
By God I will accept nothing which
all cannot have on the same terms."
(Whitman)

The young poet has aspired to and has already become a trumpet-voice of the voiceless millions of India which he has declared himself in,—

“I, the poet of labour stand
With pen for weapon held in hand.
I stand and dream of the day to come
When man shall rise out of martyrdom.
Rise in the dawn of freedom when
A new red sun and my poet’s pen
Shall sign the charter of “Man for Men.”

He is a proud inheritor of the blood of Kshatriyas—the prototypes of the western Rajputs—who strove to keep India’s name untarnished in the martial and cultural fields. The poet’s ideal types that way are Prithviraj and Sivaji.

II

Sochi Raut Roy was born some 28 years ago of middle class parents and like Napoleon spent his impressionable non-age in communion with himself amidst secluded spots. His dreams for man’s freedom were his only company. He realised that without a proper faith in the greatness of one’s individual self no redemption of any kind was ever possible. He agrees with Mazzini :

“Yes, the peoples lack faith ; not that individual faith which creates martyrs, but that social faith which is the parent of victory ; the faith that accuses multitudes ; faith in their own destiny, in their mission of the epoch ; the faith that combats and prays ; the faith that enlightens, and bids men

advance in the ways of God and humanity, with the sword of the people in their hand, the religion of the people in their heart, and the future of the people in their soul."

So his boyhood friends who could not understand him properly called him variously : some—'Buddha' for his darksome mood, and others—"The Little Old Man' for his drooping spirits. By these appellations he was known in his native village, in Utkal. He was no misanthrope withal. The checks and safeguards his parents and well-wishers had kept over him were of no avail, for the mad-dened bee ever droned about the lotus flower. At sixteen he published his first book of poems, *Patheya*, though it contained traces of Tagorean mysticism, yet it was distinctive enough to be hailed as a mark of genius by the local veteran writers. With the appearance of a drama next year and his regular contributions of poems, essays, short stories and playlets to the various magazines of Orissa, such as the *Sisir*, *Nabeen*, *Yugo-Veena*, *Sahakar*, *Palli Mangal*, etc., his name soon began to be connected with any literary activity in Orissa. In the year 1930 grimmer realities of life assailed him from all around. The Satyagraha movement started by Mahatma Gandhi gave an orientation to the poet's outlook, and the young man who had till then jilted with the romantic Muse abandoned her for the more serious-minded maid of Liberty. He, therefore, turned from the 'effete poet' and the 'poet of the Ivory Tower' that he had been, to one of pure action, simple and virile. He was rusticated from school. His writings from then on began to gather the

momentum of inspiration, and instilled a new faith into the hearts of his countrymen, in the way Mazzini's did during the Resurrection of Italy. After securing a migration certificate he passed in 1935 the Matriculation examination of the Calcutta University. In 1935 he joined the City College, Calcutta, for his Intermediate of Arts, and also published his *Chitragriba*, a bold challenge flung into the face of Romanticism and Convention and Superstition. In 1939 he graduated from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

III

Excepting perhaps the few poems collected under the title, 'The Boatman Boy etc.'* rendered beautifully into English by the famous poet Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the rest of Mr. Sochi's works are not known to the non-Oriya readers. This small collection is quite characteristic of his artistic genius.

Mr. Roy is a stormy personality when roused, and a 'wee darling' spilling his smiles over all and sundry when at peace with himself. It is the child's heart which he has that can neither brook nor be controlled by the worldly devices of men out for material progress. It is the child's heart that can always pull up into cheer. He is an idealist to the core. He is no compromiser of light and shadow ; the neutral tones of twilight have no appeal to him. He is thus a poet of pronounced contrasts in his

*Since writing this article in 1944, a collected edition of Sri Roy's poems (1937-54) has now been published by the *Modern Review*, Calcutta —9, under the title of the "The Boatman Boy And Forty Poems." (1954 edition), price Rs. 6/-.

“Enough of birds and stars and laughing spring
What can they mean to men in suffering?”

which are not a compliment to a genuine poet or mystic ; for beauty is the great harmonizing force in creation. According to him, the poet's function is to “interpret the deep tragedy of men.” The ‘Beauty’ condemned by him in his lines ‘To the Poet’ is not the great harmonizer of contradictions and the eternal source of Bliss, or ‘the Truth that is Beauty, and Beauty Truth’ of the poet Keats and the philosophers like Hegel, Schiller and Schegel, but the pettiness that is being cultivated by the idle, rich and the uncultured in their leisure moments as an escape from the hard realities of life. So Mr. Roy is deliberately opaque to the fine promptings of the world of Nature with the allurements of tint and tone, of look and fragrance, until the elementary needs of Man are first satisfied ; nor would he like Man to yield to these and become supine because, there lurks in him a certain amount of suspicion—may be a vision still to be realised—that these are the seductive Delilahs to undermine him, and wean him away from the right path. The tender aspect of Nature from which the poet often distills balm for his troubled spirits, and like Wordsworth or Shelley realises a delectable vestige of the supreme Power therein, do not charm him to any ecstasy. This is equated to other luxuries of material life, which Mr. Roy shuns or seems to shun like the elementary Man whom he has ennobled into hero-hood. This Primordial Man of the poet is not our Vedic Primitive who revelled in the adoration of the forces

of Nature. Only the terrific aspect of Hers in her flagrant sunsets or cyclonic greys silver-threaded with lightning, force a response from him for parallels of Man's similar states. The reason is not far to seek. He is supremely soft and womanishly tender, and feels the pang of human suffering most acutely. Nature is thus no fond mistress to him to court for either forgetfulness for or palliation to one's earthly sufferings. If proper conduct of man towards man cannot heal the gashes, nothing else can. He is such a firm believer in the ultimate destiny of unalloyed happiness for mankind that he has no qualms whatsoever to brush aside every other contribution to the same. Thus he would sign the charter of goodwill from 'Man to Men'.

This volume really marks the founding of a New World Order for lasting peace and plenty. But the vision of the poet of such an order is not clad in the vestments of pure white, an emblem of dispassionate and detached function. It is coloured with the redness of his youthful blood, often a 'blood-fog'. This is not so much a defect of his idealism as is of the channel it flows through. This fleshiness makes it all the more human and realistic, knitting him closer to the teeming millions of India who are now depraved on account of the alien culture they have imbibed.

The bunch of 'Boatman Boy', etc., consists of 'Red Flower,' a symbolic reference in the form of an Elegy, to Baji's heart flowering into the martyr's selflessness amidst the crimson atmosphere of man's bloodthirsty sins ; 'To the Poet,' which gives Mr. Roy's conception of what poetry ought to be, in

that it ought to liberate mankind from tyrant's clutches ; 'To the Mother,' a sublime condolence offered to the World-mother not to bewail her fate in the death of her memorable child Baji but to feel proud because he had "become the flame of life itself, a prophet-tongue of fire," ; 'To the Wayfarer,' an exhortation again in the manner of lines in Byron's *Childe Harold* to revere Baji's dust ; and 'Return' a sublime assurance that Baji is not dead but actually alive in the elements and things of Nature. This 'Return' is not a mere froth of sentiment. It affirms the poet's belief that all good things are immortal and same in their essences, though not quite cognisant to physical sense. They have their life in the heart and imagination of Man to whom their cyclic or periodical appearance in different shapes and forms are inspiring. In quite the Hind'u Karmic vein the poet addresses Baji,

"You are Tomorrow's, for
you now exist
And loom, a future glow
for ever cast
Upon the future by the red
historic past."

The truth of this statement has been affirmed by modern science in its discovery that matter is indestructible though its forms are changed often as and when its essential electrons regroup themselves in pursuance with the Law—divine to the mystic, but still unknown to the scientist.

To this young poet as well as to Carlyle history

To a wide sense of wings
Fire-tinged, unfettered, high ;
O he is a bird of freedom now
Who rests no more upon the
 crooked bough
Of wasteful agony, but
 sweeps the sky."

Of his other works, *Raktasikha*—a book of patriotic songs—though banned by the Government, is still alive on the lips of the commoner in Orissa, because they have become his very life-force. His short stories, 'Masanir Ful,' 'Matir Taj' and 'Andharua,' have been correctly characterised "to bear the clean stamp of his searching analysis, clear insight, and sympathetic responsiveness to the inner urge of the human mind for uninterrupted growth and expansion" while his 'Palli Sree' "depicts the life of the Oriya people in surroundings of native beauty and simplicity. It marks the growth of a new school of writing in Orissa which recognises at once the potentiality of the average humanity...."

To sum up, Mr. Sochi Raut Roy is really a very loveable personality ingrained with both the tenderness and heroism of a martyr who is out with his poetic pen to sign "The Charter of Man for Men."*

*Published in *Bihar Herald*, Patna, October 31, 1944 and November 7, 1944.

IV

RAUT ROY'S NEW POEMS

SINCE writing the above, my friend Sri Sochi Raut Roy has brought out a collected edition of his poems written during the years 1937-54. No estimate of Raut Roy's would be complete without referring to the present volume, his latest, which comprises the poems included in his earlier publication of 1942—"The Boatman Boy And Other Poems"—excepting the "Comedy of Hunger" and "The King of the Jungle is Dead"—and contains besides a revised version of the chapter *Return of The Boatman Boy* with the addition of its second part,—forty other poems under different headings like *Nocturne* (1937-39), 'Pandoolipi': 'Avignyan' (1937-49) and 'Apocalypse' (1953-54), which last is subdivided into 'Apocalypse', 'Vignettes', 'Dhvanilok' and five others. These forty pieces have been released in the December 1954 in book-form by the Modern Review, Calcutta—9 under the title of "The Boatman Boy And Forty Poems."

The earlier volume of 1942 does not evidence Love except in its patriotic aspect of attachment to ones country and fellowmen in the spirit of camaraderie. But this later Volume testifies to the poet's physical as well as spiritual love of the other sex. Excepting to "To The One I Remember" included under 'Nocturne' heading, the rest of his love poems, namely, 'To Chandravati', 'The Khaki', 'A Crossing Over', 'Geometric', 'Barricade The Break of Day', 'Release', 'Past Thirty', 'Obli-

vion', are all in the Section "Pandulipi and Avignyan'. Some of them are retrospects or recollections for sure. Nature is indented upon to dress up his images and to make his sensory recollections sensuous. He is indebted not a little to both Keats and Shelley whom he strives to eclipse in the bargain

"Behold the night is dead.
A silken smothering dark
of unbraided curls
Come tumbling down in a snaky torrent."

And,

"On the twin hills of your rounded breasts
Entrenched I shall lie :
Carnation lips riddled with bite
We shall sip the honeyed dew....."

The red-veined passion which starts finding "a thousand Mays captured in her eyes," and the "smiles of countless moons" on her lips, luxuriates with "tears bathing Sambhu breasts" while "the earth swims in a daze" and the "sky is shivered into a ring-dance of swirling atoms" has to be and is soon tired out into an inanity, an imbecility as it were ; for it has realised its own transitoriness and confesses,

"Play at love
I seek not ;
. Nor aspire for thy heart :
Only sit by me, if you will....."

Soon enough and Past Thirty, the red-craze turns into a white one struggling for a 'Release' from

the toils of physical love with the dawning of the sense that true love is selfless and intransient and substantially something more than a fleshy craze ; for true love, eternal one, transcends all barriers of clime and self and realises itself only with the faith—

“What little you gave
I treasure,
What I received not
Is for another’s dreams.
I love you
And that’s all that matters ;
The grand finale to a life’s query.”

The reason is not far to seek, for in his address to N . . . in Past Thirty, he realises this with a pretty utterance, that all true lovers have no personality and “are not of this world,” but “citizens of the Sun,” over-stepping “the sky and earth” they

“ . . . meet at the temple-gates of life,
On the horizon’s edge
At Orion’s doors.”

As the poet puts it, after thirty, (may be his own experience) a true lover turns into

“ . . . a lone swan in flight
From one dream to another,
Seeking the warmth of life,
Flying the cold of death,
From one mute beckoning
To a signal dream-wrought.”

We have no reason to disbelieve the poet. We hope "from one dream to another, seeking the warmth of life" shall not be changing one flesh to another flesh, but alchemising passion into something subtle and strange permeating not only all levels of life but sublimating life itself into a genuine quest for the All-Beloved.

Thus ideal harmony and bliss are attained by true lovers only when they come together "in the sphere of resonance" in

"A meeting not of the eye
 but in an aura of soulful sonorousness ;
 On the checkerboard of diverse tunes,
 hemmed in by the haze of multiple notes
 Where the fragrance of life-blossom melts
 into the Sonata of non-life
 Silhouettes only Silhouttes."

(*Dhvani Lok*)

Sri Roy cannot be said to be silent on Politics that governs Man on the physical plane. His dedication and re-dedication to man has not changed an iota but has sublimated into a martyr's fearlessness. **Man** continues still to be his demigod. He has become his greatest obsession, and the slightest injury done to him by his fellow men brings down on the latter his greatest anathema. The poet is not a national merely ; he is international in his outlook and bearing. Man has become so sacred to the poet that he is ever on the alert to fight his cause, Galahad-wise, as he himself announces :

and the "nymphs inveigle (d) the world,"—to the All-Beautiful Sun-God in the spirit of unforgettable gratitude to him, realised fully that Truth was Beauty and Beauty Truth. Santham, Sivam and Sundaram were attained there, and the thousands who attained them attained them after a consecration no less ethereal. They gave their all to the All-giving one, and in no sense the men that laboured there to attain them could be deemed a "pariah in the Durbar-Hall of a prurient Muse," in the modern utilitarian understanding of what Socialism and its creeds should taught. In the same vein it could be objected that the immortal Taj is not the "marble bauble". It is a vicious circle to argue that Shah Jahan raised this mausoleum to immortalize only himself. On the other hand, it is the ethereal whiteness of Shah Jahan's pure love, godly in every way, that has concretized itself in a speckless white radiance of a "marble dream" that has endured for ages. It is not indeed "an emperor makes his queen immortal" or seeks to pronounce an "Imperial grief." Perhaps Sri Roy's over-emphasis on Man is responsible for his interpretation of the monuments.

Sri Roy's descriptions of Nature have sometimes the sketchiness of the impressionistic Van Gogh, and sometimes the dainty glamour of the sublime Turner. A few instances may do :

(a) "The loquat-white moon unrobes

On sand banks, chalk hills and skewbald
bamboo fringes near lime-stone cliffs
Glinting under a spray of fuscous clouds."

(b) "This night.

Clumps of darkness mushroom o'er a dark world
Crowding shrouding
Piping in the fluffy air"

(c) "Opalescent clouds, indigo-hued, misty festoons . .
Cloud-vines screening the skyhedges,
where the cloud-belle romps in meadows
ultra-marine."

(d) "The salmon day will spring from the boundless
sea of time, with the redeeming voice of peace,
eagling towards the Sun.

A purple night effloresce under an agora of
luminant stars impearling the rims of the
sky with its azonic glow,

Like a milk-white banner unfurled,
A crescent of doves in the calyx of east."
etc. etc.

In the latest poems the poet's spiritual core is more in evidence than in the volume of 1942. His outlook on Man and Nature has undergone a change, and that to an infinitely better. There is a sublimation of the poet's self. He who viewed Nature as distinct from him and had not a kind word to say to her comes down from his demagogic attitude.—

"Enough of birds and stars and laughing spring
What can they mean to man in suffering?"

and yearns for her grace, for his own peace and quiet :

“In the dewdrop silence of thy soul
The azonic azure of thy lake of love—
Love that knows not colour, fragrance, sound,
O keep me in that Delight’s deluge drowned.”

He subjects himself without any reservation to be infused with her moods and emotions after having realised that she alone could in her own inscrutable darkness lead him to “a landscape where Unknown is the spouse of known.” He invokes his own subconsciousness to aid him in the endeavour. He has now no doubts whatsoever of her “ample love, where light to shed is wed.” Thus she becomes his only refuge, in order that he may rest on her wings unconscious of the buffets of the world round about him. He has acquired an indelible and a just faith that she alone is the real home of melody, and that ‘the end of music is music’. Music alone can effectively help one to forget oneself. When Sri Roy holds that the “whole history of everything is the essence of a soul getting lost in another’s” he voices a fundamental truth, asserted by Robert Browning in *Pippa Passes*, —that nothing can go on except with and in its own rhythm, and that the infinite rhythms in the world get harmonized into the Universal to form what is known as Life.

Man is as much a child of Nature as her other children “birds and stars and laughing spring” are, over whom and everything she throws her mantle of infinite love, “the pattern of opiate dark” to palliate their sufferings. Thus Sri Roy has in a way

answered his own question "what can they mean to man in suffering?" Indeed he confesses to his own defeat when he ardently desires a union with her :

"I feel like plunging in thy form
From deep to deeper in thee for ever
Forgetting myself, silent and spell-bound
I find me lost in the mighty sub-conscious."

This "Mighty Sub-conscious" is not only her centre, but the centre of everyone of her creation ; and if we go a little higher we can realise and equate it to the Divine Spark latent in creation, animate and inanimate. The poet has therefore realised himself in the creation round him when he sings :—

- (a) "I am the mid flame of five flames,
The moment that splits
A single flame from the double
Is not for me :
In the many-coloured hues
of the five-flamed lamp,
I am :
And what I am not."
- (b) "Flung from Time's Cross-bow
I boomerang :
One moment
A self-centred lotus
Hedged in by a thousand petals.
And on a sudden,
Erupting into a reckless luxuriance :
A virgin golden-womb
Unknown-impregnated."

- (c) "In this earth,
And creation's dust,
I'm scattered
Like verticals of light diffused ;
In the leaves and grass, water,
earth and atmosphere,
In all that moves
And all that's immobile."
- (d) "I'am He and Everything
The origination and the end,
The seed, the fruition eternal,
Alpha and Omega."

In this Advaitic vein the poet regards his thoughts, his actions, his dreams, his aspirations, and his achievements as so many 'seeds' and declares in unsurpassable language :

"In the deepest furrow veins of earth
I sow the seeds :
Like sparklers sowing fiery bits of flame
in the womb of the earth,
Under the guava-coloured moon
I come to tryst,
I
And my earth."

This is not a dream of the Ivory Tower. Our thoughts as well as our acts are really potential seeds which sprout, luxuriate and decay like trees perfuming or poisoning the atmosphere, till finally,

"The 'I' and all besides 'I'
 This day and nihil days,
 This illusory carnival of the earth,
 The Prime Cause and its nexus,
 all dissolve
 And reach fulfilment
 In fulness Supreme."

So life transient is absorbed into life eternal at the Finale, 'burnt out by the Sun in the verbs of his fury.' And "from the loins of the Sun a new life is born" as the poet himself asserts.

In the 'Joy of Living' Sri Roy expatiates on this quite charmingly :—

"These lips, these eyes, tears and smiles,
 These whispered words, all seem to be a
 fountain of life.
 The flowers' fragrance, the song of birds,
 hail and sunshine,
 The mart of motely colours, red, blue and
 saffron,
 Feel and smell, pain that hurts
 Facets of the one Life :
 Mutations of the elemental Life-Soul ;
 Life multiplex like diverse bits of Sun
 Upon dissimilar water-faces mirrored."

In spite of this highest intelligence, and capacity to understand, Man is never independent. His physical, his mental, and spiritual constitutions are always the marts of goods other than his own ; and his true existence is not his very own. It is really the

product of a homogeneous blend with that of others. He is ever the wanderer at his best for peace and quiet. They are never in one place or easily available. He should as much cultivate them in himself and search and grab at them from others. Thus one has to flee from one's hearth and home and cities the "brick and concrete kingdom" and becoming the mystic

"...blue bird and his mate
Rise in flight over the barren dunes."

to "taste the sap of the naked earth" to find real bliss and solace. The awareness of this fact is, indeed, the foundation for a mystical (or super-conscious) living. This perception and experience of the oneness of Life makes man blissful and fits him to participate in the Joy of Living in the Eternal and the Infinite. He is always thus a vocal link in the chain of the animate and inanimate existences, and bridges up the past with the future with his own articulate present. He is, therefore, the most tangible "witness to the bountiful joy of life that is never spent" and an "endorsement of life that begins not nor ends." He is a creator in his own right and a *Kavimanishi* at his best. He is "*Sakshi, Nityam, Pratyagatam.*" Sri Roy has felt this too well when he expresses,—

"A restless stream
Hungering for the sea,
In a constant search
For lower and yet lower levels,

I meander,
Farther and farther still,
In the bewildering maze of time and space,
Incompatible with myself."

This restlessness and suffering on its account does not last for ever ; it lasts only till the mortal 'I-ness' is not shed for ever. But once the selfish 'I' is transformed into a "formless, ageless, changeless 'I,' the "moment's mirror reveals the world" in a flash, as it were and the "eyes that see but never long" begin at once to "peer at cold reality etched upon a fleeting second." Then alone could the self be said to commence its spiritual voyage "to brave the boundless space, the negation of Time . . . and enter the Zion-gates of Life purged of death and being." When the poet expresses his own joy and wonder at witnessing

"A wee bird
like a coloured bauble
floating, flitting through the sky.
A carmine dab of sunset,
How sweet
How wondrous upon the sky's cheek ?"

The joy and wonder are no other than the bliss immanent in creation, a fitting recompense to all his toils.

Life is sustained by energy that is divine. It is infinite in its permanence. It is Eternal though it undergoes a 'sea-change' as it were, flowering into edible and inedible forms in varied atmospheres

mainly for the benefit of Man. Man at his best is no other than the Divine, and at his worst the reverse, the deadliest poison fatal to all life. His true blossoming into a daintiness—a signal of his union with the Beyond—is always like the lotus opening “its thousand petals in the fragrance of the Sun” to attract and sustain swarms and swarms of hungering bees.

Sri Roy's *Dhvanilok*, a bunch of five pieces, reminds us of Francis Thomson's Hounds of Heaven. The same ardour for the search of the Divine and to hug him in “the hieroglyphic maze of form and flesh, colour and rhythm” informs them. His attainment consists in the ecstasy spelt out :

“Silhoutte of sounds
Where the fragrance of life-blossom
 melts into the Sonata of non-life
In the blaze of beauty which no eye
 may ever see,
Upon the non-terrestrial plane without
 sound and colour.”

Thus the poet has attained to the core of Life and realised himself. Any step beyond this can only mean the blending of the knower, the knowledge and the known into an ineffable Something, a Deep Silence that suggests only but not vocative of any sound except the dewy flutterings of the aspirant's wings in the act of his absorption into the Fountain of all Life. *The Fisherman*, *Apocalypse*, *Ecce Homo*, *The Cloud-Burst* and *The Requiem* are supreme examples of Roy's philosophic poetry. We are not unwarranted when we have to remark that Roy is a good student

of Sri Sankaracharya, and the above are elucidations in a way of Sri Sankar's 'Atma-Panchakam', Nirvana-Shatakam and 'Vignana-Nouka'. Sri Roy has doubtless grown into an Advaitin, and that shall be his greatest meed for all time to come."

P. Sama Rao

Bellary

Mysore State

SOCHI RAUT ROY : A TRAVELLER-MIND

Prof. Gopal Haldar, M.A.

It is a pleasure to meet an old acquaintance, a poet of considerable promise, and renew one's friendship with him when he returns from his flight with fresh and challenging poetry. Mr. Sochi Raut Roy's *The Boatman Boy And Forty Poems* is welcome to many of his old friends for this reason.

A decade and half has elapsed since Mr. Sochi Raut Roy made his mark in Oriya, his own language, as a young and rising poet who broke new grounds in that literature. He won wider recognition almost immediately with the translation into English of his patriotic poem *The Boatman Boy* (included in this Volume too) by the poet Harindranath Chattopadhyay. "The song caught on, even as the flames catch on in a forest" said Harindranath, and happily the fire and glow of the original as is seen, is not lost in the English version of it. Since then Sochi Raut Roy has proceeded along the parallel roads of public appreciation, his original poems being supported by English versions. And Mr. Raut Roy has now finally turned to English as the medium of his expression, a section of the present Volume, the "Apocalypse" (1953-54) being partly his own original composition in that language. It will surprise his old friends by its force and verve ; and we can take it as a sign of the times as well.

Poets, we find, are growing cosmopolitan in their inspiration, and in their aspirations too. They draw their inspiration, we find, from all parts of the

globe and all periods of history, and turn to English, more naturally now-a-days, as English is the international language of our time and offers the largest and most intelligent public that poets aspire to address and win.

But how far does that ready-to-hand medium really offer a poet, not born to English, a solution of the problems of poetical expression of his experience? *The Oxford Book of English Verse* has no room for an Indian poet—M. Ghosh, Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, etc., and a piece of Tagore's translation are the only concessions occasionally made. Times are changing, and like travellers, the traveller-minds find English perhaps more suitable for the complex demands of modern experience. Mr. Raut Roy's problems as a poet are far from being simple any more. He has gathered ingredients of his art from different sources (they are noted by the poet) and he has improved his simple art with all the subtle and complex care of a modern poet and a student of modern poetry, that of T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas and the rest of them, 'imagists', 'symbolists,' 'sur-realists', etc. Happily under such impact, his poetical instinct does not fail. Examples could be quoted, and they would show that he has developed a richness in symbols and suggestiveness of language along with sensitiveness to nature and love and sensuousness of expression.

Indeed, Mr. Sochi Rout Roy has travelled far from his first days, his old readers would feel. Taking off as a modern poet with an 'international passport' in his pocket, from his native grounds he has touched many a land and taken in many an impres-

sion that the traveller-mind gets ; and in his flight of fancy appears at times drifting almost among clouds, *e.g.*, the "cause-nexus," "the signature that is Sohom," etc. These spiritual air-pockets of the Indian sky are dangerous for poetry, and we are relieved that Sochi Raut Roy is not lost in them. He does not fly away from his experiences of the Indian road, from "the asphalt streets littered with hungry men and women." There are "Atlas-vow" to carry as much of the world on our shoulders as each of us can, "Alaka Sanyal" who is no nostalgia but a reality among the cinders of bloody riots and smoking ruins, and the "Ode to Man" and Vision of Peace as "a snowwhite dove from a blood-red angry sky"—which are all assuring signature of the poet of "The Boatman Boy". For travel as he may and must,—even a modern poet must have to travel back home—to Man and Naure and Love,—and, finally to his own people, and their struggles, which as in the case of Sochi Raut Roy, make him a poet and can make genuine poetry for men.

THE RISE OF A NATIONAL POET

B. G. R.

Shri Sochi Raut Roy, the foremost people's poet of Orissa, needs no introduction. His is a familiar name in the world of contemporary Indian poets and he holds his own amongst the best of them.

About 39, this young bard can lay claim to have given voice to the heart-throbs of our mighty but mute millions. He is a true heir to the hoary culture of this once-great land and the way he holds up the mirror to the ancient glory that was once Ind, has seldom been excelled.

Raut Roy is a people's poet and his lines vibrate with the hopes and fear, dreams and thought of the helpless and the weak. Raut Roy sings of life. An unfailing abundance of the *joie de vivre*, a deeprooted love of life breathes over all his poems, and bathed in the rich and mellow feel of a living sympathy and yet meaningful purpose, they differ in species from current poetry full of hollow preachings, thought-riddles and where technique is the criterion of perfection.

Even in the beginning of 1942 at the early age of 26 Raut Roy made his mark as a litterateur in Orissa and was hailed as a people's poet. India under British suzerainty and the burning desire of the people for freedom from foreign yoke form the two corner-stones of his writings during the decade 1932-42.

As a votary of truth the poet leaped into the maelstrom of public agitation and took an active and

leading part in the struggle for freedom and for the achievement of an independent socialistic State. Very soon he came to be accepted as the leader of the young intellectuals of Orissa and most of his writings of this period echo the thunder of his baptismal by fire.

The poet's 'Baji Raut', an immortal epic of the immolation of a 12-year-old sailor boy in the people's War of Independence, was published in 1939. What a storm it created in Orissa and the far-reaching and unprecedented excitement and inspiration it gave rise to.

Raut Roy's 'Abhijan' and other poems bear the signature in fire of the titanic struggle of a budding consciousness in a new-awake nation. In his 'Palli Shree,' the poet sings of the placid, unostentatious life of the village folk, his day-to-day life with all its strife, harmony, maladjustments and social content, in a language that melts the heart. The serenity of pastoral idyll permeates the poems.

It was left to Raut Roy to sing of common man, so long an outcast from the durbar hall of literature. 'Onward traveller' was the burthen of all his songs and a ceaseless struggle against all blind reaction was his one and only goal.

The short stories of Raut Roy ushered in a new era in the history of his country's literature. The problems and complexities in the daily lives of ordinary men and women, and even the subtlest tremors of their subconscious selves are unreeled in each and every story like a fascinating moving picture. Upon the canvas of a healthy milieu he portrays real life from a quite new angle of vision. His *Masanir Fula*,

and *Matir Taj* contain examples of his epoch-making short stories.

Shree Raut Roy's path to success was never strewn with roses, but faith in man and love for his motherland ever urged him on. On the one hand, the then British rulers tried to gag this young bard and on the other the revivalists and diehards started a relentless war against him. Incarceration, heavy fines, confiscation of books, were his constant lot, opprobrium of the orthodox his daily dues, and what a spate of bitterest comment was unloosed on him for being the first to introduce the free-rhyming prose verse. But undaunted, the fighter-poet held his banner aloft and with a winsome song on his lips marched along the razor path of his choice.

In 1942 the renowned poet Shree Harindranath Chattopadhyay rendered into English 'Baji Raut And Other Poems,' and when these appeared in print, Raut Roy became famous almost overnight and men began to talk of him not only all over India but also in lands beyond the seas.

Raut Roy has written quite a large number of poems in Bengali as well as in English. When these first appeared in the various journals and periodicals all over the country, his place amongst the leading men of letters was at once assured.

The poetry of Raut Roy as also his life is a confluence of different cultural streams. The superfine sense of art which is the very soul of Orissa, the native humanism of verdant Bengal and the irresistible vitality of Andhra intermingle and blend to emerge as a forceful dynamism that is Shree Raut Roy's all own.

A child of Orissa, reared for long 14 years in the lap of riverine Bengal, he has married into a Raj-family of Andhra and that is why the cultures of Bengal, Orissa and Andhra mingle in his life as in his poetry like the famed three-streamed confluence and his poems come to have an all-India, nay, an international outlook.

Raut Roy has travelled all over the world, and has made the world his kin, though in his heart of hearts he is a real son of India and a local colour which is primarily Indian pervades all that he writes.

'Apocalypse' was written in 1953-54. During these long 14 years many new airs were trapped in the poet's aeolian harp but even like Prometheus his fire-faith never faltered for a moment.

It seems that in his later writings the poet strives to convey a picture of real life by a balanced and harmonious blending of poetic technique, word-images and speech-rhythm. The prose verse 'Bhanu-mateer Desh' is an exquisite example of this novel experiment. The beauty of everyday living was for ages locked and lost in the tortuous labyrinth of paltry problems and complex indefinites. Raut Roy's dynamism drilled the way out and his fount of poesy cascades into a stream of life.

Some selected poems from the poet's 'Pandulipi' and 'Abhignyan' have recently been rendered into English. According to a widely-read Bengali daily—"Most of these poems have for their backdrop the second world war and the sultry atmosphere of India gasping under the British heel."

A spirit of restlessness and agnosticism broods

over the poetry of 1930-45, the gymnastics of form and technique hinder the music of the true lyric. But this dry intellectualism and hollow observance of the outward form is never to be found in the poetry of Raut Roy. First and last he is a poet of life and passion bursts into Palasha-blaze in all that he writes. As in Whitman, behind the lilt of his songs we hear the booming of the surf.

“His death hath blown a redness in the moon,
A living revolutionary redness
In every dawn and in every rising sun”

Across the pyre of a patriot, Raut Roy looks into the face of beauty immortal.

In the words of a reviewer, “Unlike Elliot, Raut Roy does not look upon man as hollow-souled, stuffed with straw or shadows that know not what they are.” He never gets lost in the despondent miasma of bourgeois defeatism. It is of men that he sings and the unfolding of the multipetalled human life is the keynote of his poems. A symbolistic approach, picturesqueness and subtle nuances are amongst his unique adornments and charged with the poet’s inexhaustible dynamism, his lines throb with the restlessness of life.

“Amidst endless rollers I plunge
Locked round the waves,
I hug their proud, provoking, heaving breasts
My lashing arms
Grind the water piers to smithereens”

His verses convey images of great beauty :—

“Pneumas yoked in twos

Plough through slumbering hours

When couples lie locked in sleep

Resigned to a mooning minute”.

(Night Sowing)

He never loses his way in the smoke-screen of bourgeoisie decadence and negativism, and the proletarian atheism or negation of all that lie beyond a mere materialistic conception of life, is also equally foreign to his thoughts.

Side by side with the poetic insight and a keen socialistic approach and a neo-assessment of poetic values, we find in all that he writes a synthesis of the new and old international thought currents of all-world humanity touched with a real appreciation of love.

At the touch of his pen the inert aeroplane, a shattered temple or a age-worn Taj start quivering with a new life and stand bathed in the radiance of a new consciousness.

Not only mere portrayal of true life, but the mysterious budding of being, the endless cycling of life and death, the strange, undreamt-of cross-currents of the subconscious,—and over and above all an illumined and penetrating gauging of the varying tides of a limited human soul and the realisation of the fulness of being in utter surrender to the one and only ; these combine to constitute a wondrous web and woof for his latest publication ‘Apocalypse’.

In his 'Dhvanilok', 'Night-Sowing', 'Vignettes', 'Voices in the Dark' and 'Music of the Spheres' we hear the paeon of form fusing into the formless, words lighting the way to where no word dares tread. With a light but all-revealing touch, the poet paints sculpturesque images redolent with the ancient culture of this great land and yet warm with the life of today.

From a rigid world of forms to the formless, from a personal feel to impersonality all-embracing, from mundane earth to the realm beyond mind's ken—'Dhvanilok' and 'Vignettes' transport us.

The realism of Raut Roy is not mere photography. It is a pilgrimage from the world of vision to what lies beyond,—a journey from the hovel to the boundless blue, a constant searching for true life, an ever-watchful assaying of the real values.

It is our firm belief that this young seer would help the East and the West know each other and to Raut Roy, the rising star on the brow of new India, we extend our loving greetings.

APPENDIX

Contributors' Who's Who

Part I

- HUMAYUN KABIR**—Educationist, poet and novelist. b. 1906. M.A. (Calcutta and Oxford) at present Educational Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Education. Former Professor of Calcutta and Andhra Universities. Poetical works : *Padma, Swapnosadh, Sakhi*. Novels : *Nadi O Nari, River* (English).
- DR. P. PARIJA**, M.A. (Cambridge), D.Sc. (Hon. Causa). At present Pro-Chancellor of Utkal University, former Pro-Chancellor (1949-52) and Actg. Vice-Chancellor (1952) of Banaras Hindu University. President, Botanical Section of Indian Science Congress (1930), First Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University, 1943-48, Leader of Opposition, Orissa Assembly since 1952. Conferred D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) by Patna University in 1944 and Utkal University in 1949. Chairman, Geological Committee set up by Government of India in 1946. Awarded *Padmabhusan* in 1955.
- DR. KALIDAS NAG**—b. 1892. M.A. (Cal.), D.Litt. (Paris) Principal, Mahendra College, Galle, Ceylon. Representative of Calcutta University at the International Conference of Libraries and Librarians, Paris 1923 Professor, University of Hawaii, Delegate 2nd British Commonwealth Conference, Sydney, 1938' General Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal, ('42-46) Author and Litterateur and publicist. Works : *Art and Archaeology Abroad, India and the Pacific World, New Asia, Gandhi & Tolstoy*, etc.' Member, Council of States (1952-53).
- HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY**—Poet, Playwright. b. 1898. Brother of Sm. Sarojini Naidu. Travelled extensively in the U.S.A. and Europe to study stagecraft and cultural development. Leader of the non-official Indian delegation to Russia in 1951. Disciple of Aurobindo. Elected to Parliament (1952) Works : *Feast of Youth, Perfume of Earth, Grey Clouds, Hunter of Kalahasti, I Sing of Man*, etc.
- PROF. PRIYA RANJAN SEN**, M.A.—Educationist, Professor of Calcutta University. Elected to Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1952 Works : *Arogya Dig Darsan* (Translation of Mahatma Gandhi's book) *Bangla Sahityer Khasarda, Vivekananda Charita, Oriya Literature* (Biswa-Bharati) etc., Member P.E.N.
- K. K. KAUL**, M.A.—Poet and essayist. Educated in England and Paris. Spent several years in France, Italy and Germany. A young writer of Punjab.
- PROF. D. C. KUARNR**, M.A. critic and litterateur. Lecturer in Maharaja Purna Chandra College, Mayurbhanj.

- DR. SATYENDRA, M.A., Ph.D.**—Educationist, Reader, Department of Hindi, Calcutta University.
- PROF. PRABODH NARAYAN SINGH, M.A.**—A reputed scholar in Hindi literature, Professor of Hindi, Jaipuria College, Calcutta.
- S. SAZZAD ZAHEER** :—A leading progressive writer and journalist of India, now in Pakistan. Leader of the progressive literary movement. Educated in London, Bar-at-Law. Reputed scholar and journalist.
- D. VISVESVARA RAO, B.A.**—A connoisseur and literary organiser of Andhra. One of the pioneers of All-India Academy of Arts and Literature. A regular contributor to many Telugu and English journals.
- PROF. NATABAR SAMANT RAI, M.A.** reputed critic and litterateur of Orissa, Professor, M.P.C. College, Baripada, Mayurbhanj.
- PROF. C. BEHERA, M.A.** Poet and critic in the Oriya language. Lecturer in Puri College, Puri, Orissa.
- PROF. J. B. MAHANTY, M.A.** A poet and critic in the Oriya language. Author of *Modern Oriya Literature* (English), A lecturer in Phakiramohan College, Balasore, Orissa.
- DURGAMADHAV MISRA, M.A.** A poet in the Oriya language, contributes articles on modern literature to Oriya journals.
- NOLINI DEVI**—A promising writer.

PART II

- PROF. VISWANADHA SATYANARAYANA, M.A.** b. 10.9.1895. An eminent poet, novelist and dramatist of Andhra. Author of many a poetical work, lyrics, short stories, novels and dramatic works. His novel *Veyi Padagalu* received a prize from Andhra University. Author of the epic 'Ramayana' in Telugu—which is his magnum opus. A reputed Sanskrit scholar and author of four Sanskrit works one of which is a Drama. Main Telugu works : *Ekaveera* (novel, 1929) *Kinnera Sani Patabi* (a ballad, 1935), *Venaraju* (Drama, 1935), *Anarkali* (a lyrical drama, 1934), *Jhansi Rani* (poem, 1951), *Ramayana* (epic 1940-51).
- DR. K. R. SRINIVAS IYENGER, M.A., D.Litt.**—b. 1906, taught at Valvettiturai, Ceylon (1928-31) D.Litt (1939) at present Professor of English, Andhra University Waltair (since 1947), Member Advisory Committee, National Akademi. Author of many English publications, such as *Lytton Stratchey* (1938), *Indo-Anglican Literature* (1943), *Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945), *Sri Aurobindo* (1945), *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (1948), *On Beauty* (1945) *The Mind and Heart of Britain* (1943), etc. Also a writer in Tamil and a reviewer of repute.
- DR. AMARESH DATTA, M.A., Ph.D.** b. at Sylhet. At present a lecturer in English in Saugar University, M.P. Awarded an international award by the Association of Poetry in Rome on a collection of his English poems *Captive Moments* in 1952.

- P. SAMA RAO, B.L.** b. 2.10.1898—a leading advocate of Bellary, Mysore State. A reputed painter, poet, essayist and critic mostly in English. Author of 10 vols. of English poems entitled *Wee Darlings*, *Sparkle*, *Enticements*, etc., and of treatises entitled *Indian Art*, *Essays in Art*, *The Art-heritages of Vijayanagar Empire*, *Critical Memoirs of Tolstoy*. *Whitman*, *Sir Shankara*, *Ernst Crossby Longfellow*, *Byron*, etc., translator of *Sri Shankara's Soundaryalahari*, *Bhartrihari's Niti Sringara*, *Vairagya Satakas*, *Dance of Siva* from Siva Ramayana. A distinguished scholar in English, Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu languages in Mysore State.
- GOPAL HALDAR, M.A.** formerly a professor—took leading part in *Kisan* and workers movements. A reputed litterateur and left-wing journalist in Bengal. Author of many outstanding works, e.g., *Sanskritir Rupantar*, 1941 (Bengali). Novels: *Ekada*, *Anyadin*, etc. Editor of the progressive Bengali monthly "Parichaya."
- BASUDHA CHAKRAVARTY**, Editor of this Symposium, b. in East Bengal, brother of Mr. P. Chakravarty, Hon'ble Chief Justice, West Bengal. A free-lance writer, journalist and literary critic, contributes articles of literary interest to various journals of India.

APPENDIX

II

WORKS OF SRI SOCHI RAUT ROY

In Oriya :

Patheya (*Poems*, 1932). Purnima (*drama* 1933), Prema O Panya (*essay*, 1935), Chitragriha (*novel*, 1936), Avijan (*Poems*, 1938), Palli-Shri (*Poems*, 1940), Rakta Sikha (*Poems*, 1939, *banned by the then British Government*), Baji Raut (*Poem*, 1939-1942), Pandulipi (*Poems*, 1947), Masanir Fula (*stories*, 1946) Matira Taj (*stories*, 1947), Bhanumatira Desa (*Poems*, 1948), Avignyan (*Poems*, 1949), Chhai (*stories*, 1949), Hasant (*Humorous Poems*, 1949), Adhunik Oriya Kavita O Upadha Bichar (*essay on Prosody*, 1951), Tale Mati Upare Akasa (*novel*) Sagara Talar Dheu (*novel*).

In Bengali

Sairen (*Poems*, 1942-43), Baji Raut (*Poem*, 1943-44).

In English

1. *The Boatman Boy And Other Poems* (1942) Translated by Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyay : Publishers :—Book Forum, 72, Harrison Road, Calcutta—9.
2. *The Boatman Boy And Forty Poems* (1937-1954).
Translated by Harindranath Chattopadhyay and B. Sinha. The book contains also poems written by Sri Raut Roy originally in English. Published by Modern Review Office, Calcutta—9.
3. *Poems* (In the Press).
4. *Industrial Labour Welfare and Labour Legislation in India* (1946).
5. *Industrial Labour Welfare and Labour Relations in Australia and New Zealand*, 1952 (*To be published*).

